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MY LOVER.

BY E. E. REXFORD.

My lover has no lofty name,
No wealth at his command,
And yet I love him just the same,
And count him best of any in the land.

His hands are hard, and large and brown;
His heart is warm and true,
And though he has not great renown,
I love him best of all I ever knew.

His voice is soft, whene'er he speaks,
As mother's to her child;
And I have often kissed his cheek,
To see how fair his face was when he smiled.

He loves me, and I am content;
His heart will let me in,
And life and love, together blent,
From coming years, some wealth must surely win.

The Winged Whale:

OR,
THE MYSTERY OF RED RUPERT.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN,
AUTHOR OF "SCARLET HAND," "HEART OF FIRE,"
"WOLF DEMON," ETC.

CHAPTER IV.

UNDER THE PALMETTOES.

A HUNDRED paces from the barrack, a bank of roses nestled under the shadows of a little group of palmetto trees.

The night was quite dark, but afar off on the line of the horizon, shone the faint light that told of the coming of the rising moon.

By the side of the roses stood the sailor, known as Rupert Vane, and the fair Spanish girl, Isabel.

The perfume of the flowers floated on the soft breeze of the night.

Idly Isabel plucked a rose, and from under her long eyelashes watched the face of the sailor.

"How pleasant the night is," she said, with a long breath, inhaling the perfumed air.

"Yes, it is very pleasant," Rupert replied.

"What a change from the crash of music and the giddy whirl of the ball-room," Isabel continued; "here, all is peace and rest."

"Yes, it seems to lull the senses to forgetfulness," Rupert observed, absently.

"Not so with me," said Isabel, quickly.

"This scene brings back to my memory years long past; years, when a ray and thoughtless child, I dreamed not of care or pain, and deemed the world all bright and beautiful."

"The world should be naught else to one like you, lady."

"You are pleased to flatter," replied Isabel, smiling.

"No; you are young, fair; there should be strong arms and willing hearts to protect you from all the rude blasts of this life."

A faint sigh came from Isabel's lips.

"Why do you sigh?" asked Rupert, quickly.

"I can hardly tell," and the girl smiled faintly. "I thought of something that happened long ago."

"And is the remembrance an unpleasant one?"

"No," replied Isabel, quickly. "I sighed to think that the days are gone."

"They may come again," said Rupert, carelessly.

"Yes, I am sure they will come again," cried the girl, quickly, and a glad light shone in her full blue eyes.

The sailor replied not, but a flash of joy was on his dark face.

"Is this your first visit to Pensacola?" Isabel asked.

"Yes, my first visit," he answered.

The answer was simple and direct, yet the quick ear of Isabel detected a double meaning in the little sentence.

"You have never been here before?"

"How could that be possible? Am I not an American—a Yankee? My home is far to the north," he said, with a slight smile.

Isabel understood the evasion.

"Senior, it is strange how familiar your face is to me," she exclaimed, suddenly.

"My face?"

"Yes."

"How can that be possible?"

"I have seen it in a dream."

"A dream?"

"Yes, listen. It is many years ago. I am a laughing, joyous child. My father lives, and I am the darling of his heart. It is a sunny afternoon in June. I am seeking wild flowers in the wood that fringes the bayou."

Suddenly on the air rings the scream of the panther.

I sink on my knees in terror.

Above my head, the beast clings to the arching limb; crouching low, each muscle is nerved to spring upon me. Then a youth dashes through the aisles of the forest, armed only with a broad-bladed hunting-knife. The beast springs upon and bears him to the earth. A short, fierce struggle, and then the panther rolls on his side, dead. My preserver rises to his feet, his left arm torn by the cruel teeth of the beast. I am saved, and, forgetting all except that the youth, whose face is as red as an Indian's, has saved my life. I throw myself into his arms and vow to be his wife whenever he should claim me."

"A strange dream," said Rupert, quietly.

"Yes, and yet it seems to me so much like reality," replied Isabel, with an earnest look into the swarthy face of the sailor.

"Once had a dream almost a sequel to yours," said Rupert, slowly. "Do you wish to hear it?"

"Yes," answered Isabel, with downcast eyes.

"The hero of my dream was a red-skin-



"Isabel, the man that takes you from me must have a brave heart and a strong arm."

ned youth, who was a slave, although no drop of negro blood was in his veins. Like the youth you dreamed of, he once saved the life of a young Spanish girl, his mistress, whom he loved better than all else in the world beside. His secret was discovered. The lash repaid his boldness. They tied him up and whipped him. He was a slave, and like a slave they punished him. The lashes cut into his back, but their pain was but little, compared with the agony that filled his heart when the truth came to him that his love was hopeless, and that he had cherished the passion of a madman.

"And the after life of this youth?" asked Isabel, earnestly.

"My dream does not extend to that," replied Rupert, "but still it is easy to guess at it. Humbled to the dust, and with a fiery hate of all mankind burning in his breast, he fled from Pensacola forever."

"Pensacola?" cried Isabel, with a joyous smile.

"Yes, it is here that the scene of my dream is located. In other lands he sought forgetfulness of the wrong that had been done him."

"And did he forget the girlish heart that vowed to be forever true to him?" asked Isabel, with an accent of reproach in her voice.

"No!" cried Rupert, impulsively; "as he fought his way upward in the world, one face was ever before him. Like a guiding star, it led him onward to fame and fortune. It was his beacon-light, shining afar on the troubled waters, that promised a haven of joy. He had but one thought—one wish: to be able some day to return and claim the woman that he loved."

"And will that day ever come?" asked Isabel, and a shy, glad smile was on her beautiful face.

"Suppose that he should return—that he has returned—found the girl grown into a woman, even more beautiful than her girlhood promised; suppose that the first intel-

ligence that met his ear was that she was promised to another; would he not be apt to think that she was unworthy of his love to so soon forget the promise that she had made?"

"Rupert, judge not the heart of the girl too harshly," said Isabel, softly.

He started as his name, pronounced by the soft lips of the beautiful girl, fell upon his ears. Oh! how the old memories swept back over his soul.

"Has she not been false to the vow that she made?" asked the sailor, slowly.

"No!" replied Isabel, quickly and proudly, "the word given by the girl will be kept by the woman. Isabel never has been, or ever will be false to Rupert."

A moment the sailor looked into the soft, blue eyes, now shining, lustrous as moonlit waves, with love's passionate fires, and then, with a gentle motion, he drew the unresisting girl to his heart.

The blue eyes looked up with glances full of love into the passionate black orbs of Rupert. Her head rested contentedly on his manly breast. The lips of the lovers met in a long, lingering kiss, the pure and holy seal of true love.

"You will be mine?" he asked, softly.

"Yes, forever and forever," she replied, smiling fondly, as she gazed with a loving look in the dark face of her sailor.

"Oh, Isabel, I have dreamed of a scene like this for many a long year," he said, smoothing back the silken, golden hair from her fair forehead.

"And so have I," she replied. "Each year I have looked for you to return and call upon me to redeem my pledge. Often in the stillness of the night have I lain awake and fancied that I saw your face in the darkness that surrounded me."

"And your face, too, has been ever by my side. I have closed my eyes and felt your soft kiss upon my lips, seen your eyes beaming love on me; and now at last, my dream is reality. Isabel, I have come to claim

you," and Rupert kissed the pure white forehead, fondly.

"I am ready to fulfill my word," replied the girl, promptly.

"You will go with me then and share my fortunes?"

"But they may be desperate ones."

"Then the more need that I should be by your side to comfort you. The woman who truly loves will cling closer to her husband in the hour when the clouds are dark around him, than in the one when his path is in the sunshine," said Isabel, softly.

"But you know not what I have been, what I may be even now," Rupert said.

"I do not fear. The man, who, as a boy, gave his arm to the panther's jaws, and risked his life to save another's, will not be likely to bring disgrace upon the woman who loves him well enough to forsake home and friends and follow his fortunes throughout the world," replied Isabel, firmly. There was no shade of doubt on the earnest face that looked into Rupert's.

"Isabel, you are an angel!" cried the sailor, fervently.

"No, I am only a woman who loves with all her heart and soul," she replied.

"And who is loved with a devotion as deep as the sea whereon I have snatched my fortune!"

"You are a sailor?"

"Yes."

"And you come to Pensacola for me?"

"Yes, again," he answered. "Isabel I have never forgotten you for a single instant since we parted, though long years have intervened. Judge then how deep was my sorrow when I heard that you were the promised wife of this Captain Estevan. When the cruel words fell upon my ears, the very air around me seemed stifling."

"And did you believe that I was false to you?" asked the girl, reproachfully.

"No, I fought against that belief; yet long years had passed. You knew not whether

I was alive or dead—perhaps thought that I would never return and demand the fulfillment of the vow that you so freely made."

"Rupert, until I knew in truth that you were dead, I should still have believed that you lived; and living I felt sure that you would come for me."

"But the report that you are engaged to the son of the commandante?" the sailor asked.

"My father dying bequeathed me to the care of Don Carlos. He has ever been tender and gentle, a second father to me. He asked me if my heart was free. I evaded the question and replied that no Pensacola gentleman had won my love. He asked me then, how I liked his son, Captain Estevan. I could not tell my guardian that his son was distasteful to me; perhaps had I done so, it would have been the wiser course; but I could not bring myself to speak freely, for I knew it would pain the man who had been like a father to me. Don Carlos thought my silence gave consent. He said nothing in the world would give him greater pleasure than to see me the wife of his son. He further said he would not press me to answer then, but would give me time to think the matter over. The next day I was told that Captain Estevan had reported that I was betrothed to him."

"Isabel, the man that takes you from me must have a brave heart and a strong arm, even though he were backed by all the Spaniards in Pensacola," said Rupert, a determined light shining in his dark eyes.

"Do not fear; I have given you my word; I will keep it," and Isabel gazed fondly into the manly face of her lover.

"And you will fly with me?"

"Yes, to the ends of the earth!" replied the girl, passionately.

"It will take a few days to arrange for our flight; besides, now that I am here, there is another matter that I wish to attend to."

"In Pensacola?"

"No, in the forest amid the wigwams of the red-skins of the Appalachian tribe," replied Rupert. "But we must arrange some way of meeting. It will not do for me to come openly to the house of the commandante; it would excite suspicion."

The girl was silent for a moment; her fair brow furrowed by thought. Then, suddenly she looked up again into the face of Rupert.

"You remember the glade in the forest by the bayou?" she asked.

"Where the panther tore my arm?"

"Where you saved my life; yes."

"And you will meet me there?"

"Yes, to-morrow afternoon at three; but, let us return to the ball-room; my absence may excite remark."

Again and again the lips of the lovers met in fond caress, and then they left the shade of the palmettoes.

CHAPTER V.

SOLDIER OR CUTTHROAT?

THE soft rays of the rising moon cast a faint light over the scene. Hardly had the figures of the lovers disappeared, when another dark form stood by the little clump of palmettoes.

It was the form of Captain Estevan.

He had stolen from the ball-room, and, concealed by the darkness, had watched the lovers.

Behind a group of bushes he had crouched; too far from the twain to overhear their words, yet the soft air of the night had brought the faint sound of a passionate kiss to his ears.

With features convulsed with anger he stood beneath the palmetto's shade. He saw the lovers enter the little circle of light that came from the open ball-room door and then re-enter the room and join the gay throng of dancers.

"May Satan seize him!" cried Estevan, between his teeth, in anger. "Who can he be? A stranger evidently, and yet he conversed with her like an old friend. A friend? A lover more likely; for I'll swear that I heard the sound of a kiss. He then has touched the lips that she so coyly refused to me. The ice has melted; the statue become a woman. The girl has met this fellow before, but where? She has never left Pensacola and he is a stranger here; but stop; I jump too hastily at conclusions. They may have met years ago, before either my father or myself came to this new world. That is reasonable."

"Very reasonable," said a hoarse voice that seemed to come from the ground at the feet of the young Spaniard.

Estevan started in astonishment.

The voice seemed like an echo to his words.

"It's only me, captain," said the voice, and then a head came through the leaves of the rose-bushes, followed by a rough, ungainly body, dressed in the Spanish uniform.

"Roque Vasca!" said the captain, in astonishment.

"The same to command, noble captain," replied the soldier, rising to his feet.

The soldier was a powerfully-built fellow, standing nearly six feet high. His features, gross and brutal, betrayed the drunkard and the bully.

"What are you doing here?" asked Estevan, quickly, and with a touch of anger in his voice.

"Don't be angry, senior captain," said the soldier, with a grin. "I helped to fix the old barracks there for the dance, and for the exquisite taste displayed by me in festooning the flags upon the wall, and in the arrangement of the green branches, your worthy father gave me a gold-piece."

"Which you have spent in making a beast of yourself at the wine-house," interrupted Estevan.

"Senior captain, you are a wizard! That is exactly what I have done. A knave of a fisherman, bet me that I couldn't drink ten bottles of wine and walk off with them. For the honor of the Spanish service, I couldn't decline the bet. I won, of course; then I celebrated the victory with two bottles more, and feeling tired, I laid down to sleep under the shelter of these bushes. I was awakened by the sound of voices. It was the Senorita Isabel and this foreign gallant."

"Did you overhear their conversation?" asked Estevan, eagerly.

"But little of it, senior captain. I only heard the last of it," replied the soldier.

"What did their conversation relate to?" "First, that this strange senior seeks something in the wigwags of the Indians; what, I do not know, for he did not say; next, he arranged a place of meeting with Senorita Isabel."

"Ah! where was it, and when do they meet?" asked Estevan, in rising anger.

"My memory is dreadfully bad, senior captain," replied the soldier, with a grin.

"Your memory bad?"

"Yes; I never even remember my debts, nor how many bottles of wine I drink, when I come to pay for them. There is always a difference of two or three bottles between my reckoning and the keeper of the wine-shop's," and the soldier thrust his tongue in his cheek in a significant manner.

"You are lying, knave!" cried Estevan, in anger.

"Oh, noble captain!" exclaimed the soldier, "I swear that I speak the truth. If you doubt me, ask the keeper of the wine-shop."

"You know well where the Senorita Isabel is to meet her lover. How much do you ask for the information? Will gold cause you to remember?"

"Gold is a wonderful thing, senior," said Roque, with a comical grin; "it will do almost any thing, except restore the dead."

"Will it restore your memory?" demanded Estevan, impatiently.

"I think it will, senior," replied the soldier.

"There," and Estevan placed a gold-piece in the broad palm of Roque.

"Oh, wonderful! I do remember!" cried the soldier, briskly. "The Senorita is to meet the strange senior to-morrow afternoon at three."

"And the place?" demanded Estevan, in feverish impatience.

"In a glade in the forest by the bayon, where the strange senior once saved her life from a panther."

"That is indefinite," said Estevan, with a frown.

"By Saint Peter, it's not my fault," replied Roque; "I have related faithfully what I heard."

"There are many glades in the forest."

"Yes, and many of them by the bayon."

"To-morrow?" asked Estevan, thoughtfully.

"Yes; the Senorita loves the stranger; she gave up her lips freely to him. He kissed them, not once, but a dozen times."

Estevan answered not, but ground his teeth in anger.

"If I were the senior captain, I should prevent the strange senior from meeting the lady to-morrow in the forest glade," said the soldier, with his shrewd eyes fixed intently upon the passion-stirred face of his officer.

"How prevent the meeting?" asked Estevan, with a covert glance at the face of the other.

"Get the stranger to take a walk with you in the moonlight, and then have some trusty lad in ambush to put an ounce ball through his head," said Roque, coolly.

"And who will perform the task?"

"I will, for five gold pieces," answered the soldier, quickly.

"It may be difficult to induce him to leave the ball-room," said Estevan, thoughtfully.

"Oh, I think not, senior captain."

"I have it!" cried Estevan, suddenly.

"I have hit upon the very device!"

"Good, and I'll hit your man for you!" exclaimed the soldier, with a chuckle.

"How soon will you be ready?"

"Almost immediately. I've only to go to my quarters and get my weapon."

"In twenty minutes, then?"

"I'll be ready."

"Good; the affair is understood, then?"

"Yes."

And so the two parted.

The soldier hastened in the direction of his quarters, while Estevan walked slowly toward the ball-room.

"Now, if Roque's hand be firm, the fate of my rival is sealed," the captain said, musingly. "Isabel must be mine. I am madly in love with the girl; and then, she is wealthy, too. Once she is my wife and her fortune mine, I'll leave this cursed life and return to old Spain. I hate this New World. To remain here is but living death. I'll strike this rival from my path, and then the girl is mine."

As Estevan entered the circle of light that streamed from the open doorway, a female form came from the ball-room and advanced to meet him.

The Spaniard started in astonishment as his eyes fell upon the face of the woman.

She was a girl in years, barely twenty; tall and stately in figure, a very queen in bearing. Her face was wondrously beautiful, a rich olive in tint, the warm blood showing freely beneath the transparent skin. Eyes of liquid fire, black as night's mantle, lit up the face as the sun lights up the dawn. Her ebony hair curled in little crispy ringlets close to her head.

A glad smile was on her face, and eagerly, with outstretched hands, she advanced to meet the Spanish captain, she advanced to meet him.

"Nanon!" exclaimed Estevan, in astonishment.

"Yes, Nanon!" exclaimed the girl, and impulsively she threw herself upon his breast.

With a quick glance around, Estevan drew the girl from the circle of light into the obscurity of the darkness caused by the shadow of the barrack.

"Why, Nanon, how came you here?" asked Estevan, in astonishment.

"Are you not glad to see me?" questioned the girl, eagerly.

"Yes, of course," he replied, in confusion.

"And yet you have not kissed me," and there was a bitter reproach lurking in the tones of her voice.

The Spaniard drew her affectionately to his breast and imprinted a kiss upon her full lips.

"There, are you satisfied, now?" he asked, putting on an appearance of gayety.

"Yes, you see how little it takes to satisfy me."

"But, Nanon, why are you here?" he asked.

"To see you. What other reason could bring me from New Orleans to Pensacola?"

A shade passed over Estevan's face as her words fell upon his ears.

"Did my sudden appearance surprise you?"

"Yes," he answered.

"I arrived this morning."

"Alone?"

"No; Antoine, my cousin—you remember him—he is with me."

"But, why have you come to seek me? I promised that I would return to New Orleans in a month."

"Estevan, I will speak frankly. I heard that you were to be married," and as the girl spoke, she looked eagerly in the face of the Spaniard as though she expected to read the truth there.

"Nanon, I will not deceive you," said Estevan, after remaining silent for a moment; "the report is true."

"True?" and the girl's eyes were filled with tears.

"Yes, but listen to the reasons that led me to this course. Nanon, I am a ruined man; deeply steeped in debt; even my commission is pledged. The match was arranged by my father; my promised bride is wealthy. Her money will pay my debts. I dare not offend my father, for I am utterly in his power."

"And do you love this girl better than you do me?"

"No," he answered.

Again the smile shone on the face of the girl.

"It is only money then that separates us?"

"Yes," answered Estevan, slowly; "he was unable to guess what was passing in Nanon's mind—money and my father's will."

"Then I do not despair," said the girl, gayly.

"Why, what do you mean, Nanon?"

"Never mind; in time you will know all," she replied.

"You will remain in Pensacola?"

"Yes, until I either win or lose the stake for which I play. You will come and see me?"

"Yes."

"Here is the direction," and she gave a card into his hands. "Will you come to-morrow?"

"Yes."

"I must return to the ball, or Antoine will notice my absence. He does not yet know the motive that brings me here."

Again Nanon held up her lips for the Spaniard's kiss, and then glided from his arms and re-entered the ball-room.

"Accursed luck!" cried Estevan, in despair. "What demon tempted this girl to leave Orleans and follow me here? The path before me is a difficult one. I must tread it with cautious steps."

With anger in his heart, Estevan followed the girl.

CHAPTER VI.

THE AMBUSH.

RUPERT escorted Isabel to her former position, and then, with a low bow, left her.

The faces of both were radiant with joy. Happiness filled their hearts; the future looked bright before them.

Andrews, who had been on the look-out for Rupert's return, joined him at once.

"What luck, cap'n?" he asked, quietly.

"The best in the world," replied Rupert, his face flushed with joy and his dark eyes shining brightly with happiness.

"You've had quite a long talk with the gal?"

"Yes."

"Every thing satisfactory?"

"Yes."

"All smooth water, eh?"

"Yes."

"And I suppose you're as happy as a clam at high tide?"

"Well, I don't know exactly how happy that inhabitant of the mud is at the time you mention, but he must be very happy indeed to compare with me," Rupert replied, smiling.

"The gal is faithful?"

"True as the needle to the pole!"

"Or our brigantine to her helm, eh?"

"Yes."

"Well, women are queer cattle; leastways, I've always found 'em so," said Andrews, reflectively. "Sometimes they'll hang onto a fellow like grim death; and then again, their grip is so light that a cat's paw of wind will break it. Your gal seems to be one of the hold-fast kind."

"Yes, I'd stake my life upon the truth of her love," said Rupert, impulsively. "It is eight years since I have held her in my arms—since she told me that she loved me and would be mine. She was but a child then, but the woman holds still to the word given. Years have only increased her love. She is willing to fly with me when I say the word. She will forsake home, friends, all, for me."

"Well, now, she's a regular stunner!" said Andrews, in admiration.

"She's an angel!"

"Without wings and dressed in petticoats," the Yankee added, laughing. "But, how soon are you going to take the gal?"

"I can't tell yet," Rupert replied, thoughtfully. "That depends upon circumstances. I have some other matters to attend to first."

"Other matters!" exclaimed Andrews, in surprise.

"Yes, it is not the quest of the girl alone that has brought me to Pensacola."

"What else?"

"I have a mission to fulfill; a word to be righted," replied the sailor, and a cloud passed over his handsome features.

"By the way, cap'n," said Andrews, suddenly, "did you tell the girl who and what you was?"

"No; she only knows that my name is Rupert, and that I am a sailor."

"I think that it is better for you to keep your secret to yourself than to reveal it," said Andrews.

"We have little to fear, even if it was openly known in Pensacola that we are in the neighborhood," Rupert said, carelessly.

"Well, I don't know that," replied Andrews, with a dubious shake of the head.

"The saucy brigantine has made a name for herself on the high seas, and there's many a man-of-war captain that would give a handsome sum to lay his vessel alongside of her."

"That will never be," answered Rupert, quickly; "on the broad ocean there's not a frigate that our beauty can't show a clean pair of heels to."

"That's so, cap'n; but, if these Spaniards here should discover that we are in the neighborhood and send information to our foes, they might come upon us unawares."

"We must be careful and disguise our presence, then," said Rupert, thoughtfully.

"That's just my idea on that point."

"To-morrow I shall seek the chief of the Apalachee nation. In the wigwags of the red-skins I may procure the information that I wish. That task done, then I'll bear away my bride, and on the broad, blue waters laugh defiance to pursuit."

"Oh, cap'n, I forgot!" cried Andrews, suddenly.

"What?" asked Rupert.

"Do you know Captain Estevan, the son of the commandante of this post?"

"No."

"You know that Senor Garcia said he was to be married to this little gal?"

"Yes; but the report is untrue."

"Jes' so; but when you left the ball-room just now, I noticed that this Estevan followed after; it looks to me as if he was a kinder spyin' on you."

Rupert's brow darkened.

"Let him take care," he said, with an accent of menace in his tone.

"I had an idea that he was kinder hankerin' after the gal, for he didn't look a bit pleased," Andrews said, shrewdly.

"He is in love with Isabel and seeks her hand."

"Your rival, eh?"

"Yes."

"Better look out for yourself then, for these Spaniards are treacherous cusses; they had just as lief stick a critter in the back as eat their fodder," Andrews said, seriously.

"I have very little fear," said Rupert, contemptuously. "If this Captain Estevan ever measures wits or weapons with me, I fancy that he will dearly rue it."

"Yes, but he won't do it fairly; these tan-colored dons are up to all sorts of mean tricks, so just keep your eyes open," Andrews said, in warning.

"Rest assured that I shall not walk blindly into any trap that may be laid for me," Rupert replied. "You say that this Spaniard followed Isabel and myself from the ball-room?"

"Yes," Andrews answered.

"Could it have been for the purpose of spying upon our interview?"

"Well, it looks like it to me."

"Have you noticed whether he has returned or not?"

"Yes, he has not come back yet. Ah, there he is now, by jingo!" and as Andrews spoke, the Spaniard entered the ball-room.

A moment Estevan looked around him, and then, seeing the two Americans standing together, he came toward them.

"He's coming this way; he's got his eye on us," Andrews said, noticing the movement of Estevan.

"He seems to be in search of some one."

"And that some one is a chap about your size, cap'n," Andrews said.

"He'll find me without any trouble."

The approach of the Spaniard forbade further conversation.

"Can I have a word with you, sir?" Estevan asked, bowing politely.

"Certainly," replied Rupert, returning the salutation. "Excuse me for a moment," he said to Andrews, and then he followed the captain.

"As you please," replied Rupert, carelessly.

The hats procured, Estevan led the way to the open air.

The moon shed its soft light over the earth.

"Is there any particular direction in which the senior would prefer to walk?" Estevan asked.

"No, all ways are alike to me," Rupert replied, carelessly.

"Let us turn to the right then. The path leads to the forest. We shall be secure from observation."

"Lead on, sir."

The two proceeded on their way.

Rupert's face showed not a sign of suspicion, yet his hand, which he had thrust carelessly into his bosom, grasped a loaded pistol.

He was prepared for danger, if danger came.

Ten minutes' walk brought the twain to the edge of the timber that fringed the line of the city.

"Here we can speak freely and without danger of being overheard, senior," said Estevan, turning and facing the sailor.

"I am at your service, sir," Rupert said, calmly.

"If I mistake not, you are a stranger to our city."

"You are right; I am."

"But you are acquainted with Senorita Morena?"

"Yes."

"May I ask the nature of that acquaintance?"

"You may," said Rupert, with an untroubled smile.

"And the nature is—"

"Stop; you are proceeding a little too fast; I said that you might ask the nature of the acquaintanceship, but I did not say that I would answer the question," and Rupert smiled, benignly, in the face of the Spaniard.

Estevan colored to the temples. He felt that he was being played upon.

"You are laughing at me, senior!" exclaimed the Spaniard, striving to hold his anger in check and appear outwardly as calm as his rival; for, in his own mind, he felt sure that the dark-hued stranger held that position in regard to him.

"Laughing at you, senior captain?" cried Rupert, in a tone of great astonishment, which was plainly assumed for the occasion.

Estevan bit his lip; for the moment he did not dare to trust himself to speak.

"I believe that I am speaking correctly in addressing you as Captain Estevan, although I have never had the exquisite pleasure of making your acquaintance," continued Rupert, blandly.

"Yes, I am Captain Estevan Alvarado, and the affianced husband of Senorita Isabel."

"So I have been told," said Rupert, calmly and without exhibiting any sign of emotion. "I congratulate you upon the happiness before you."

"Congratulate the devil!" exclaimed the Spaniard, in a rage.

"Oh, softly and gently," smilingly said Rupert; "don't lose your temper. You may need it all before we get through with this interview."

There was a latent menace in the words of the sailor that fell discordantly upon the ear of Estevan.

"Senior, you can not deceive me with your evasive words. I know that you have met the lady who is to be my wife in secret to-night!" cried the Spaniard, quickly.

"And so you set spies to watch the senior, eh?" questioned Rupert, contemptuously.

"Your question is an insolent one, and I shall not answer it," replied Estevan, haughtily.

"Let us terminate this interview at once," said the sailor, abruptly. "What do you want with me?"

"To warn you from the path that you are treading."

"Bah! I laugh at warnings!"

"Then the consequences of your rashness be on your own head."

Estevan turned upon his heel as if to depart.

"Is this all that you have to say?" Rupert asked.

"Yes," and the Spaniard walked rapidly away.

"Does he think to frighten me with empty words?" and a scornful smile curled Rupert's lips. "He little knows Red Rupert. I'll have Isabel, if I have to level every roof in Pensacola to win her."

The footfall of the Spaniard died away in the distance.

Rupert slowly proceeded in his footsteps. A dozen paces had he walked, when suddenly he halted.

His eyes were fixed upon a small cluster of bushes some fifty feet in front of him to the right.

He saw a gun-barrel gleam in the moonlight among the foliage of the bushes. It was aimed directly at his heart.

He halted, for death stared him in the face. (To be continued.—Commenced in No. 57.)

Oath-Bound:

OR,

THE MASKED BRIDE.

BY MRS. MARY REED CROWELL.

AUTHOR OF "SHADOWED HEART," "SCARLET CENT," ETC.

CHAPTER XVI.

A NIGHT'S WORK.

IT BEING ANNETTE Willoughby's monthly afternoon "out," she had, on her return from the city at six o'clock, gone across the bleak lawn from the depot to the Riverside Lodge; there was sternness and unrest in her face that Lida remarked the moment she opened the door.

"Is any one home?" she had asked, as she entered.

"No one but myself; and I am an impatient prisoner. I hope to take my old position in a week at furthest. You are willing?"

Annette's lips curled.

"Delighted; for I am sickened to death of it all, since my miserable failure."

"How ever you dared to do it," said Lida, half admiringly. "You have a wonderful brain; did you know it, Annette?"

"Let us go straight to Edenwilde and get Crystel's knife. Of course she has it, and with it in our possession we can defy suspicion—if suspicion there be. Again, Bertrand, the time when this deed was committed must have been, as the attending physician swore, the very day we went to New York, and while Crystel was at The Towers."

His face lighted up as he thus disposed of the case to his own satisfaction.

Then he smiled outright.

"I've just thought how extremely ridiculous we are to dare even think of connecting Crystel in this affair. Bertrand, we are insulting her."

But a coldness had seized the very vitals of the young lover.

"But there will be an investigation, and I, as a law-student, can see through it all better than your unaccustomed eyes. Who, in the eyes of the world, would so be Undine's natural enemy rather than my Crystel? All our private life will be exposed to the hungry gaze of sensational-article readers; the whole world will know more of Crystel and Undine and I, than we know ourselves."

"But, by producing Crystel's knife and seeing the authorities, we can put a stop to any investigation, can't we?"

"If we can prove where my darling has been every moment since Undine left her home, I have all hopes."

"Then, let us go to Edenwilde without an instant's delay."

At Crystel Roscoe's home the news had not yet been received; the morning papers lay still unfolded on the stand, and Hellice and her sister were feeding their canaries.

They turned around as the two gentlemen entered, and without a word of salutation, Bertrand strode up to Crystel.

"For God's sake, give me your pen-knife!"

She blushed a little, suddenly remembering that she had lost it on her recent journey; then she grew a little terrified at Bertrand's wild manner, no less than his language.

He impatiently laid his hand on her shoulder. "Don't keep us waiting; your pen-knife, with the initials on."

Hellice had dropped the lump of sugar, and looked at the two in wonderment. Then Clifford explained: "You have not read the papers, ladies? If you had, you could appreciate Bertrand's unusual excitement. Let me beg of you, Miss Crystel, to accede to the request."

Hellice snatched up the paper, at the same time remarking, rather haughtily—"I am sure I can not see why the paper should affect either my sister or her property."

"But I can't give it to you—I have—lost it."

A cry fell simultaneously from the lips of the young men; and the girl blushed to think she had thus to confess at this late day what she had hoped Hellice never would know.

"Oh! no! no, my darling; give it to me, for the love of heaven! for the sake of your own sweet life!"

Bertrand's pleading, agonized words alarmed her; and she looked appealingly at her sister.

Hellice had read the awful lines, and was staring in white wonderment at Crystel; then, by some mighty effort, she spoke.

"Have you any idea where your knife was lost?"

Then Crystel knew she must confess her stolen visit.

"At the station, or near there, I fear."

"When?" demanded Bertrand.

"Last Thursday, the day you went to New York."

"Yes, and a hopeful light showed itself in Clifford's eyes. 'The afternoon you spent at The Towers, I think you said.'"

Crystel blushed painfully. "I did not go there. I know I said so. Bertrand, my darling, please don't be angry. I went to New York!" Then, with a hollow groan, the young man sunk to the sofa.

"Oh, my Crystel, my darling! God help you, God help you!"

Clifford was about to speak; but Hellice interrupted him, and went up to her sister, and laid her hands on her shoulders.

"I comprehend it all. Crystel, that paper says Undine Del Rose is murdered—there, don't look so white, my poor child; she was murdered the very afternoon you were at New York, and your pen-knife, we fear, was found on her person."

She spoke with a dreadful calmness, and Crystel shivered, but spoke not a word. Evidently the suspicion had not taken hold of her, as yet.

"Well, what more?"

Hellice looked down into the pure, frightened eyes.

"Can you not see that it is only a matter of time as to when you shall be arrested on suspicion? Oh, my Father in Heaven, she is dying—I have killed her!"

For with the full force of that kindly cruel blow, the girl's senses had mercifully fled.

And out in the hall, amid all the confusion, Annette Willoughby smiled at her scene.

"And I'll swear I heard her say she'd 'find a way to remove her!'"

CHAPTER XVIII. DARK DAYS.

THE body of the unfortunate girl, after the necessary formula of law had been gone through with, was conveyed to Mrs. St. Havens' residence and from there buried, in all the style befitting their station in life. Then the house had been darkened, the funeral guests departed, and Mrs. St. Havens, in her sable robes, paced the floor in restless grief.

Although not three days had elapsed since the body was discovered, the world was familiar with the facts elicited at the inquest; and, despite the power and position of the families at The Towers and Edenwilde, dark rumors and suspicions were flying the rounds of the newspapers, while one or two of the sensational illustrated weeklies had woven a romantic story, and heralded it before the hungry public eye.

It seemed strange; passing strange that all this trouble had come so suddenly upon so many people; and while the outside world was hovering before they alighted on their prey, the little world at the home-steads on the Hudson were half paralyzed with grief and fear.

General Roscoe, at the very beginning of the trouble, had had his lawyer down at Edenwilde; while able detectives had been sent to work to discover if other enemies than the supposed had been at work.

Bertrand Haighte, almost beside himself with grief and horror, had instantly gone down to Lawyer Allan; and in blissful ignorance of the perfidy and deceit of his trust-

ed legal adviser, had poured the story of his agony in his ears; probably more as a friend than a client. To his surprise, he found Lawyer Allan as stricken with grief at the untoward fate of Undine Del Rose as was Bertrand at Crystel's danger.

To his greater surprise, the man refused his counsel, and even asserted his own conviction that Crystel had murdered the girl in a fit of revengeful anger.

Bertrand turned, in passionate indignation, to the man. "I wonder how you dare utter such words to me, sir. You, who have enjoyed the confidence of my family these many years, to desert the standard when the first fight threatens. Mr. Allan, I beg you will make ready whatever account you have against me, and make a full return of all papers and documents. I shall transfer my business to another firm. Mr. Allan, good-morning."

And Bertrand walked indignantly out of the office, while the lawyer watched him with reddening cheeks and kindling eyes; then, when he was out of sight, his anger found vent.

"Take your business wherever you please, but remember you have heard the lion in his den! You may have hated her, but I loved her! You may seek to cover the guilt of the girl who took her precious life, but it shall be my task to convict her before the world! Urged on by love and hate—most potent powers that sway the heart of man, I shall succeed! I have thwarted you before to-day, Bertrand Haighte, for my darling's sake! I shall thwart you again for it!"

He gathered up the business documents of Bertrand's, and summoned his confidential messenger to take the first train for The Towers.

Then he donned his hat, called a carriage, and drove straight to Mrs. St. Havens'.

When he re-entered the carriage that had waited over three hours, his face betokened his triumph.

"I shall succeed in avenging my Undine's death! And now to work, earnest work!"

It had been no difficult matter for Bertrand to secure the services of the world-famous firm of Trask & Trask; and although he had at first thought there possibly might be some way of escape for Crystel, he was convinced the moment he left Lawyer Allan that an action would be brought against Crystel for the charge of murder, preferred by Mrs. St. Havens.

It was a week before it was done; a week of such agony at Edenwilde as few of earth's children are called to endure.

And then it came; for all it had been feared and expected, it felt like a thunder-bolt, when, with all due formality, yet respectful mien, the officer of the law rode out to Edenwilde in his close carriage, attended by his deputies, to arrest Crystel Roscoe!

In all the pitiful loveliness of her striking childhood, she was taken to the city; by her side, more tender and loving than her wont, the faithful sister remained, while General Roscoe and Bertrand followed in their carriage.

All these past days Crystel had lived in a sort of a pathetic stupor; she had not seemed to be conscious of her danger; she was not at all alarmed or worried; simply calmly indifferent. She knew she was suspected of the most horrible crime that can be mentioned, and yet she was not moved thereby.

"Why should I weep as you do? I am innocent, and why should I suffer? Only for you and papa, and poor dear Bertrand!"

Then her lips would quiver, but she would bravely smile in her sister's heart-broken face.

In all her fair, delicate beauty she faced the surging sea of eyes that filled the courtroom; her sweet face, more girlish than ever since the agony that had paled it, her tender, wistful eyes, her red, trembling lips and flushed cheeks were stronger proofs of her innocence to many a keen-eyed man than all the array of evidence against her.

We need not weary the reader with a detailed account of that long, tedious week of keenest, intensest suspense; when the flattering hopes, the blighted fears first heightened then depressed their spirits. Now, when the night came, and they took the prisoner to her cell, she and Hellice wept in each other's arms, while the lover and the father paced the long corridor in distracted anguish.

Every effort had been made to have her conveyed to a hotel at night; but for her appearance had been instantly offered to the extent of a half-million dollars; but it was not accepted. The offense was a capital one, and to the common cell, under the roof with common felons, Crystel had to go.

The warder's wife had done all she could for the poor girl's comfort, and it was almost touching to see the attempts she had made to hide the staring prison-look of the dingy rooms. A strip of gay Turkey rug was spread on the floor, white sheets and a lace-edged pillow-case were on the cot; a little curtain was hung to hide the iron bars of the window, and two cushioned rocking-chairs had been brought in.

Day after day the sisters took their seats and listened while it was proved beyond the shadow of a doubt, that the knife was Crystel's very own; it was shown how she had visited New York on the fatal day; how she had seemed agitated and nervous both going and coming on the trains.

Lawyer Allan, in all the glee of his devilish triumph, said he was prepared to prove, as a final evidence, that the prisoner had been heard to declare, in the presence of important witnesses, that she would find a way of removing deceased from her path, or Mr. Haighte's, which was pretty much the same. Murmurs of horror and indignation arose from various parts of the room, and Bertrand sprung to his feet in insulted wrath.

How dare—

Then remembering himself, he sunk down in his chair again.

"Annette Willoughby, you will now state, on your oath, what you heard the prisoner repeat to Mr. Bertrand Haighte and Mr. Clifford Temple, in the presence of her sister, Miss Hellice Roscoe."

Every ear was strained, and a silence like death reigned. The persons mentioned were astonished at the lawyer's words, and awaited with ready, indignant denials, knowing full well that Crystel had never used such manner of language. A low cry of wounded pride came from the lips of the family when they saw this woman, one who had slept under their roof and eaten at their table, ascend to the witness-stand.

In a cold, heartless voice, the woman told her story.

She had been coming to the drawing-room with a shawl for Miss Crystel. The doors were all open, and she had heard a great deal about the romantic affair that occurred the night before she came, and when the voice of the bride-elect fell on her ears, she instinctively listened, with a sort of

curious awe, and she heard the prisoner say: "Undine Del Rose dare not cross his path again! Let her, but attempt it, and I will find a way to remove her." Then they laughed, and she went on: she'd never a thought of it again, if it hadn't struck her all of a sudden that it was her duty.

The lawyer glanced triumphantly at Bertrand.

Pale as ashes, his eyes glittering, he was staring at Crystel; Hellice's face was buried in her hands, and Mr. Temple was biting his lips and looking bitterly at the woman.

Crystel's tears burst forth, for the first time during that long, long time of excitement.

"I charge you, on the Holy Evangel of God, to say if this be true, Bertrand Haighte!"

He arose, with his anguish in his face.

"May God in heaven succor her, and forgive these lips that criminate her: it is true!"

"And your oath, sir?"

He turned to Clifford.

"It is true," he repeated.

"Miss Hellice?"

"She never meant it when she said it—never."

Then Crystel stood up, pale and calm.

"I know I said it; but why those innocent, loving words should condemn me, God only knows. I do not."

Then she resumed her seat.

The jury went out; they came in; and—

we spare the sickening details—Crystel Roscoe was found guilty, and remanded to her cell! And Annette Willoughby went away with a horrible smile on her pale lips, and a light in her eyes that seemed a flash of some old-time brilliance!

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 53.)

The Blackfoot Queen:

OR,
OLD NICK WHIFFLES IN THE VALLEY OF DEATH.

A Sequel to "The Phantom Princess."

BY CAPT. J. F. C. ADAMS,
AUTHOR OF "THE PHANTOM PRINCESS; OR, NED HAZEL, THE ROYAL TRAPPER."

CHAPTER XVI.—CONTINUED.

NED MACKINTOSH was prudent enough, when he left the camp with Miona, to take a very different direction from that which led toward his destination. When assured that he was beyond sight, he turned off sharply to the right, and made all haste toward the ridges which for so long a time seemed to have shut them in.

Whiffles was confident that they had traveled a goodly distance by this time, for both of them were too wise to permit any thing—not absolutely beyond their control—to prevent their making all haste out of what they might properly view as a literal Valley of Death.

So the trapper did not bother to look to the right or left, but kept straight on toward the mountain, intent only upon reaching it, as close in the rear of his friends as possible.

He knew the Blackfeet were swarming through the valley, searching up and down and in every direction for their prey, and, as he had remarked to his friends, this persistent pursuit would be kept up so long as there was the least prospect of success.

The ground was very rough and uneven, and the wood became more open as he advanced; but he and his dog bounded forward like a couple of chamoises, scarcely heeding the obstructions any more than those animals.

Once over the ridge and into the stream that flowed northward, with his faithful paddle in his hand, he would fear no pursuit from his foes. A day or two would carry him beyond the Blackfoot country, into a territory where they would be sure of meeting friends, and where all danger of Miona's recapture would be ended.

Filled with these cheering thoughts, Nick pressed forward and soon found himself ascending the slope toward which his eyes had been turned so longingly for a day or two past.

On up he climbed, until at last he reached the culminating point. Here in the pale moonlight he cast his eyes anxiously down the other slope. He could just discern the course of the stream, along whose banks, somewhere near at hand, lay the canoe, which he had used several months before in making the same journey.

The descent upon the other side was much more abrupt, and in a short time Nick Whiffles was at the bottom. Then a few hundred yards further, he stood upon the bank of the stream.

Just then a footstep struck his ear, and turning his head, Ned Mackintosh stood before him. Nick impulsively caught his hand.

"Where's the gal?"

"She is all right," laughed Ned, at his eagerness, and while he spoke Miona came smilingly forward and joined them.

"Didn't you have any trouble?"

"None at all," replied Ned. "As soon as we got fairly away from the camp-fire, we struck a bee-line for the ridge, and never stopped till we reached this point, where we awaited your coming. We haven't seen an Indian on the way, and count ourselves very fortunate."

"You are indeed, by mighty if you ain't!"

"Are we not out of all danger?" asked Miona, with glowing face.

"We ain't yet, but we soon will be, if good luck follows us. These varmints ain't goin' to let us alone. That canoe of mine ain't far off."

The search was begun, and in a few minutes ended in discovering the little boat stowed away under a clump of heavy bushes. It was placed in the water, and the three took their seats, just as the ears of all heard that same ominous, dreaded tremolo whistle of the Blackfeet startlingly near them.

Nick muttered an expression of impatience.

"There the varmints are ag'in, by mighty!"

CHAPTER XVII.

JOURNEYING TO THE HAPPY LAND.

THE fugitives, including Calamity, were seated in the canoe, and Nick Whiffles was holding the paddle in his hand, when the well-known whistle of the Blackfeet was heard. The worst of it was that it sounded down-stream, so that it looked as if they would be compelled to run a gantlet.

Dipping the paddle softly into the stream, he began cautiously moving with the current, listening and watching, while Calamity in the prow of the canoe, with his paws resting upon the gunwale in his old-fashioned manner, was all vigilance and watchfulness.

All the wonderful skill of Whiffles and his dog were now called into exercise, and he warned the lovers not to attempt to move or to speak even in a whisper.

The moon, faint though it was, was against them, for the owl eyes of the red-skins would be on the alert, and a little in-advertency at such a time would prove fatal. Nick kept as close under shore as possible, and moving with a tardiness that at times made his progress less than that of the current itself.

Something less than a quarter of a mile was passed in this manner, when the same whistle reached their ears again. This time it came from a point directly below them, and was instantly answered from a point above.

At the same moment, Calamity gave utterance to his warning whine. At that time they were in the shadow of the shore, and close to a sort of tiny bay, about a rod in depth. Into this Nick instantly sent the canoe, for the time had come when a halt was necessary.

Nick was quite confident that the canoe was not seen by the Blackfeet as yet. Red Bear had been wise enough to know the point aimed at by the fugitives, and upon being freed from his durance at the camp-fire, had summoned his warriors and started upon a fierce and immediate pursuit.

In the deep shadows of the cove, overhung by dense shrubbery, the darkness was impenetrable. The occupants of the canoe could look out on the creek and see the surface of the water reflecting the pale moonlight, but when they withdrew their gaze they could not see each other's faces.

Scarcely five minutes had passed when the soft rustling of a stealthily-moving Indian was heard. It was a familiar sound to Nick; he had heard it many a time in years past, and he could not be deceived. The red-skins were searching for them. The trapper knew, from the peculiar sound, that the red-skin had parted the bushes within six feet of the canoe, and was peering into the gloom in search of them.

It was a trying ordeal, where men, woman, and dog knew that their lives depended upon absolute, utter silence, but all stood it well. Like so many statues carved in stone, they sat, motionless, speechless, and almost breathless.

For two minutes the Blackfoot waited and listened, and then withdrew, and in the same stealthy, cat-like manner continued his search along the banks above them.

This Indian had not been gone long enough for the whites to dare to attempt to breathe freely, when a second enemy put in an appearance.

A slight rippling of the water caused all to turn their gaze toward the creek; they saw a dark, round body floating upon the surface, which they instantly recognized as the head of an Indian, who was swimming in the deep water.

Nick Whiffles, with the instinctive sagacity that distinguished him, made up his mind that discovery was inevitable, and he grasped the buck-horn handle of his knife to make sure it was ready.

Swimming against the current, the savage moved very slowly, so as to make his search as thorough as possible, and doubtless his black eyes were scrutinizing the dark shore, on the alert for the first indication of a hiding-place of his victims.

Curiously enough, the Indian swam on by the cove, and had nearly passed out of the range of vision, when he seemed to suddenly discover his oversight, and turning back, swam directly into the opening.

The water was so deep that he continued swimming even when abreast of the canoe, and within an arm's length of the shore. He was groping about with his hand, to make certain of not missing any thing within, and began at the upper side of the half-circle, made by the indentations, and proceeded to make the circuit of the cove.

Such a search could not fail to be effectual, and, as he came around where the boat lay, his hand touched the gunwale, and he slid rapidly along, with the instant conviction that he had discovered his prey.

"Hooh!" he exclaimed, as he reached his arm further over.

But, just then, something was placed upon his shoulder which quietly but powerfully forced him under the surface of the water and held him there.

It was the iron grip of Nick Whiffles that forced him under, and against which he was powerless to resist.

The Indian struggled fiercely, and in doing so, Nick felt an ornament around his neck.

It was an ornament so peculiar in its construction, that he recognized the wearer at once as Red Bear.

A thrill of amazement run through the hunter at the discovery, for it seemed as if the young chief was doomed to haunt them.

"Lean t'other way, quick, or the boat will upset," said Nick, as he braced himself in the canoe.

His command was obeyed, and calling upon his immense strength, he drew the limp, almost lifeless body into the boat, depositing it at his own feet. There was a gasp and a struggle, and as Red Bear gained command of himself, Nick spoke hurriedly in the Blackfoot tongue.

"Don't stir or speak, or I'll drive my knife through you!"

The Indian did not move, and but for his hurried breathing, the lovers would have believed he was dead.

Ned Mackintosh felt that it was misplaced mercy to spare this treacherous red-skin, and he was impatient that Nick should have drawn him into the boat out of danger; but there was no gainsaying the trapper, who certainly was entitled to have his way.

For half an hour they remained in this cove, at the end of which time, Nick felt satisfied that the Blackfeet were all up the stream out of their way, and consequently the coast was clear.

Once more he dipped his paddle beneath the surface, and began cautiously floating down the current, still keeping close to the bank, and moving with the same care that had distinguished his actions from the first.

Red Bear lay motionless in the bottom of the canoe. Faster and faster rowed the boat, until gradually it neared the center of the stream, where advantage could be taken of the current.

The hours of darkness were improved, and the toughened old trapper plied his oar with ceaseless energy.

The night wore on, and mile after mile was placed behind them. When the gray light of morning broke over the wood and stream, all were asleep excepting Nick Whiffles.

When the forenoon was well advanced, the creek was found to open into the south branch of the Saskatchewan.

Here, for the first time, Nick turned the boat ashore, touching the beach very lightly, but with sufficient force to awaken Red Bear, who came to the upright position and looked wonderingly about him.

"Red Bear," said Nick, "this is the second time you've been in my power, since yesterday's sun went down. Just as you were drownin' I found it was you; I hauled you out, and saved you. You are in my power now, and though I say it myself there ain't many that would be as merciful to you as I am. But, you're an Injin and I'm a white man, and your ways and mine ain't the same. I've took your weapons away from you, 'cause I can't trust you; and I've carried you so far away from your warriors that there ain't any more reason to fear 'em. You kin now step ashore and go back to your village, with the good-by of Miona Mackintosh and Nick Whiffles."

The Indian stepped sullenly out, and as his feet touched the ground again, he looked back for a moment, and then turning about, vanished in the wood.

The next instant the canoe was under way down the South Branch. When the lovers opened their eyes, and saw him gone, the trapper told them that he had left, and there was no more need of thinking further of him.

Near noon the entire party landed, and a fire was kindled, while Nick and Calamity went in search of game. It was easily procured, and he prepared one of the best meals that they had ever eaten. Then they had a long rest, after which they re-entered their canoe, and continued their leisurely way down the South Branch until night closed about them. A camp was made, and with Calamity as their sentinel, the entire party secured a long night of slumber and freedom from fear.

The river was followed until its most northern point was reached, when the canoe was left on the beach, and they made the journey on foot across the country to the Churchill river, where they procured a canoe from the Indians, and when they disembarked again, it was at their destination, FORT CRUICKILL.

Here Miona joined her mother and father, whose joy at the restoration of their long-lost daughter I leave to the imagination of my readers.

Nick Whiffles was looked upon as the hero he really was. He at first refused the rewards that were pressed upon him, but, more to gratify the donors than himself, he accepted a couple of splendid rifles, two magnificent silver-mounted revolvers, and a number of knives. Besides this, Ned succeeded in inducing him to take a package, with the promise not to open it until after their departure. In this parcel was a photograph of the girl, and underneath it a roll of bills amounting to two hundred pounds.

Nick remained at the fort several days, but finally bade all farewell and started southward on his return, with Calamity, to join Firebug, and to resume his wild, lonely life in the solitudes of North America.

A week later, the homeward bound vessel "Victoria" sailed up through Hudson's Bay, out through the straits, into the stormy Atlantic, and on across the ocean toward London. Among her passengers were Bandman and his wife and daughter—the child of the woods—the betrothed of Ned Mackintosh, who, the happiest of the happy, was one of that vessel's precious cargo in its homeward flight over the sea.

THE END.

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WHY NOT I?

BY ROPE ANDOL.

E'en the birds their sweethearts have,
Why not I? Why not I?
All the day they sing and sing,
While I sigh,
Ah! if I could find a heart
True and good, true and good,
Gladly would I yield my own;
Yes, indeed, I would.

Shall I then a damsel live?
No, no! No, no! No, no!
Some one's loving heart to win
I shall surely try.
Flirting very pleasant is,
Just for fun! Just for fun!
But its pleasures I'll resign
When a heart I've won.

Well, tho' birds may mock me now
Merrily, merrily,
Somewhere in this world I know
Some one waits for me.
Yes, indeed! Yes, indeed!
Some one's heart will seek my own.
Sure I am, 'tis not my fate
Long to live alone.

A Jealous Woman's Work.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

A TINY little ring of plain gold, with a glowing orange topaz set in the center; a letter, opened, lying beside it, addressed, in a cursive hand, to Miss Ida Lovette, of the city of New York.

Looking at the ring and letter, with unspeakable venom and wrath in her jet-black eyes, was a tall, handsome woman, with brilliant red lips and carmine cheeks; whose teeth gleamed in a strange smile as she lifted the ring and let it drop on the marble commode, listening to its clear, ringing sound. A handsome, jealous woman, whose name was Juno Burtleigh, and who loved the man whose letter to Ida Lovette lay before her.

"Poor little fool!" she murmured to herself, taking up the note and glancing over it again.

"And to think Robert Storms will go past me, and offer her all his wealth and elegance!"

Then, with frowning brow, she read over the lines designed for far different eyes.

"MY FAIRY IDA," it said, "I have resolved to tell you how I love you; I had thought to wait until the reception to-night, but am all impatient to know if you are as truly mine as I am yours? Can you love me, darling? Do you? And if you do, will you wear this ring to-night, so that the moment I see you I can tell my fate. If my darling, you can never know how dreadful to me the alternative will be—if you don't want me, you need give me no answer beyond refusing to wear the love-token I send. I will strive to be a friend, if not a lover."

"Your own, ROBERT S."

And that was the tender, loving letter Ida Lovette's heart would have almost broken to have received, so truly did she love Robert Storms; of whom she was thinking, upstairs in her room directly over Juno Burtleigh's, and where she sat wondering if Mr. Storms would be at the minister's reception that evening.

Then Juno heard her sweet, bird-like voice soaring in song; some gay, blithe melody that indicated the joy of her pure, girlish heart.

And Juno Burtleigh, with a smile, threw the letter deliberately in the glowing grate, where it whirled a moment, then blazed out and floated slowly up-chimney in a wreath of white ashes.

"So much for Caesar's ignorance in permitting me to take the boarders' letters for distribution! I am in luck, and Ida Lovette will never be the wiser for it. Little girl! I imagine Rob Storms will look in vain for this topaz ring to-night."

She carefully laid it in her portmanteau, not daring to trust it out of her personal possession.

Then she dressed herself; and like a Jewish princess she looked in her purple dress with its rich, heavy folds, and her rare, gold ornaments.

And, with a subdued laugh in her bright eyes, she walked down to the residence of the minister.

The pleasant parlors of the Rev. Dr. Emerson were nicely filled when Ida Lovette and her parents came; Ida transcendently lovely in her blue silk dress and delicate lace trimmings.

Standing near the staircase, where he could plainly observe every person as they entered the parlors, was Robert Storms, an expectant light in his eyes, and his grave face wearing a brighter smile than usual.

Above on the first landing, Juno Burtleigh's dark, witching face was bending over, watching him with well-concealed triumph, smiling when he saw the light first to his eyes as Ida Lovette descended the stairs with her mother.

Laughing, all afire in her fresh, maidenly beauty, Ida went down, directly past him.

"Mr. Storms, isn't this a beautiful evening?"

She gave him her little hands, warm, bare and ringless.

A quick, awful shadow loomed up in his eyes; then he bowed lowly, and Juno knew he was crushed by the blow she had dealt.

Ida went on into the parlor, with a disappointed pain in her heart, wondering why it was that Mr. Storms was so grave and distant!

While Juno Burtleigh, watching Mr. Storms walk rapidly from the house with that gray shadow on his face, joined the groups below, and outshone them all with her piquant brilliancy.

A small back room, that commanded but a bird's-eye view of the sailing white clouds; rather cozily furnished, yet bearing unmistakable evidences of extreme prudence; and its only attraction a dark-haired, flashing-eyed woman.

Not the radiant, rare creature of other days was Juno Burtleigh, but broken by the five years of reverses, not less than by the inroads her own passionate temper had wrought.

She was earning her own living now; the dainty skill and taste she used once upon a time to lighten her own attractions she was obliged now to turn to a more profitable use.

So Juno Burtleigh made delicate *bijouterie* for a number of ladies, and among her customers were—Mrs. Les, and Ida Lovette.

Ida was the same as ever; perhaps a trifle less sweet than in the olden days; certainly very merry and lovable; and, all unsuspecting, she was Juno's best friend. They often talked over old times; but Juno had time and again noticed how studiously Ida avoided the name of Robert Storms, and her heart misgave her when she saw what she had done.

At first she had thought to herself win Mr. Storms when Ida should have been supposed to reject him; and the thought lent courage to her heart; but since that night when she had seen him go out of the minister's house, neither she nor Ida, nor any one they knew, had seen or heard of him. And now, hundreds of miles away from the little country boarding-place, the two women had met in New York, little dreaming it would eventually decide the destiny of one of them.

Little by little Juno failed, until, one day, when Ida went to her, she found her, flushed and trembling, essaying to sit in the great arm-chair.

"This will not do," and Ida, with firm kindness, insisted on the sick girl's taking the lounge by the window.

You must see a doctor—can not your landlady's boy run round to our physician's office? Dr. Holmes, of the Avenue?"

Then, seeing the swoon that was surely creeping over Juno, Ida, in alarm, rung for the boy and dispatched him for the first doctor he could find.

It was probably a half-hour when he returned, accompanied by a physician—a grave, finely-formed man, whom Ida turned to greet.

Then a cry—

"Why, Mr. Storms?"

His eyes suddenly lighted, then shadowed again as he extended his hand.

"Miss Ida—yet I hardly presume it is 'Miss' still."

"Yes, I am Miss Lovette. And this is our friend, Miss Burtleigh, who is ill. So you are a doctor?"

"Yes," he returned, very quietly, as he took Juno's hand in his.

Then, after a few kindly, thoughtful words of encouragement and advice, he bade them good-morning.

"Dr. Storms," called Juno, in a fluttered sort of way, "I can never get well by your treatment, or through Ida's kindness, unless I first confess my sin, and prepay you both."

Then, with her white, trembling fingers, she took the topaz ring from her pocket-book and gave it to Dr. Storms.

He looked at her in a keen, troubled way; then at Ida, who was utterly at a loss to comprehend it all.

"She never knew of it—it was my sin, my jealousy! I am so penitent—you will forgive me, both of you, and be happy yet?"

Then, seeing the stern look on his face, a new thought took possession of her, and she almost screamed out:

awkwardness. Why the deuce don't she come? The wind is confounded chilly."

Then Montgomery again resumed his walk.

A distant bell sounded on the still night air.

Montgomery again examined his watch.

"Nine o'clock, exactly," he said. "Now, then, where is the White Witch?"

His gaze wandered up and down the street but no female form met his eyes.

"By Jove!" he cried, suddenly; "suppose this should happen to turn out to be a hoax? I never thought of that before. It would be a delightful joke if I walked up and down here for an hour or so and no one came. But, who would play such a jest on me? No, I must have patience. My mysterious Newport lady will probably appear soon."

And even as he spoke he caught sight of a female figure approaching on the Park sidewalk from the direction of Eighth avenue.

"I wonder if that is she?" Montgomery muttered, as he stopped by the gate and watched the woman who was approaching so rapidly.

"No White Witch this time, however," mused Montgomery, as he noticed the dress of the woman.

A few minutes and the dark figure brushed by the young man.

"Follow me!" she said, in a voice evidently disguised, as she passed by Montgomery. Then she went through the gate and entered the Park.

Montgomery obeyed the command, and followed in her footsteps. He had recognized the voice of the White Witch.

As he followed her by the dim moonlight he was enabled to notice her carefully.

She was about the medium height, and habited in a water-proof cloak, that reached to her ankles and completely hid the dress beneath from sight. The hood of the cloak was pulled over her head, and a thick green veil concealed her face from view.

She was completely disguised; and, if she had been Montgomery's most intimate acquaintance, she could safely have defied his recognition.

Within the Park, the veiled woman took the path leading to the left, straight down the slope, passed through the archway, and ascended the little hill beyond.

On the crest of the slope she halted, cast a quick glance around, as if to assure herself that there were no listeners by, and then she turned to Montgomery, who had followed her without a word.

he listened attentively to their conversation.

"You received my note?" the veiled woman said.

"Yes," Montgomery replied. "It was hardly necessary to ask the question, for you see that I have kept the appointment."

"True; it is now some weeks since we met at Newport; do you remember my words?" said the woman, still striving to disguise her voice.

"Yes," replied Montgomery, and as he spoke, he was vainly trying to remember when and where he had heard the voice of the veiled woman before, for that it was familiar to him, he was sure.

Then, you have not forgotten the White Witch?"

"No," Montgomery replied.

"Have my words come true?" she asked.

"Now, if you are indeed a witch, you need not ask that question," Montgomery said.

"I see you still doubt my power."

"I have not said so."

"Not in words, true; but the manner of your speech implies the doubt."

"You should be a witch, indeed, for you guess my thoughts," Montgomery said.

"Now, I will answer the question that I asked. Some of my predictions have been fulfilled; the others will be."

"You are sure of it?" Montgomery asked, gravely.

"As sure as that I stand here," replied the White Witch, firmly.

Montgomery was staggered by her manner.

"You do not speak. I trust that you are beginning to believe; would to Heaven that you would, and thus save yourself from the utter ruin that awaits you."

"Utter ruin!" exclaimed the young man, in wonder.

"Yes, utter ruin!" repeated the woman, quickly. "I predicted on our first meeting that you would lose friends, wealth, and love. I put love last, as the loss of it inflicts more anguish than that of wealth and friends combined. A man will see his fortune vanish with a smile, look calmly on the faithful friend's departure, and yet, the knowledge of the falsehood of the woman to whom he has given all the love in his nature, will tear his heart and make him loathe the world and all its creatures. You will not dispute the truth of my words, for your own heart tells you that they are not false."

"You know their names and yet will not reveal them to me?"

"I can not," again said the veiled woman, with anguish in her tones.

"Why not give me the reason for the refusal, then?"

"I am bound by a promise. I have almost broken that promise by revealing to you the existence of the league."

"Who are you?" asked Montgomery, suddenly.

"Do not ask me. I can not tell you that, either."

"You are not a stranger to me; I am sure of it. I will lift the veil from your face; then, I shall know you."

With uplifted hand, Montgomery advanced to the shrinking woman.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

BEWARE!

The spy, concealed behind the bush, lifted his head and peered through the foliage.

As he moved, a dried twig snapped beneath his hand. A smothered exclamation came from his lips; he feared discovery. But, the apprehension was uncalled for. Montgomery and the veiled woman were so occupied in their interview, that a much louder noise than the mere cracking of the twig beneath the hand of the spy upon their meeting, would not have attracted their notice.

As Montgomery advanced with his hand raised as if by force to remove the veil that hid the features of the unknown, with a quick movement she retreated from him.

With one hand she waved him back, while with the other she drew the veil down closer over her face.

"No, no, Angus Montgomery, you will not do that," she murmured, still evidently trying to disguise her voice as she had done throughout the interview.

"And why will I not?" demanded the young man, impatiently. "My losses have almost made me desperate. You have told me a strange—wonderful story. How can I tell that you are my friend—you, who know so well the plans of enemies? Am I not rather justified in believing that you, too, are a foe?"

"No; if I am your enemy why should I take the trouble to warn you?"

"So that I may know that it is mortals who are pushing me to the brink of ruin and not the decrees of fate. There is little satisfaction in striking a man unless he knows who gives the blow."

Angus Montgomery, I protest to you by all that is good or holy in this world, that I am not an enemy—that is, I mean that of my own free will I would rather die than wrong you even by a thought. I can not tell you more of the Three than I have already told you, for were I to do so I should betray the person from whom I received my information. You will not take the veil from my face, I am sure; you will respect the wish I express to remain unknown."

"And why are you sure of that?" asked the young man, pausing, irresolute.

"Because I know that Angus Montgomery is a gentleman."

Montgomery bit his lip. The blow struck home. He raised his hat politely, and bowed.

"I thank you for the compliment," he said; "you are right. I will not attempt to penetrate your disguise. I will be content to know you only as the White Witch."

"I should not have trusted myself alone with you here at this hour if I had not known your character," she said, softly.

Again the voice sounded familiar to Montgomery, and he would have sworn that he had seen the mysterious woman when her face was not covered.

"Forgive my rudeness; but—pardon the question—do I not know you?" he said.

"Yes."

"Ah!" he cried, eagerly.

"I am the White Witch!" and she laughed low and merrily as she spoke.

"Enough; I will not try to detect who you are," said Montgomery, baffled, "yet I am sure that you are well known to me, and by another name than the fanciful one that you have given yourself."

"You are wrong; you do not know me," replied the veiled woman, quietly, a touch of sadness in her voice.

"No?"

"It is the truth; and perhaps you will never know me."

Montgomery was puzzled. He did not guess the double meaning in her words.

He forgot the old saying, that, "one never knows a woman until he has married her."

"Heaven has ordained that for a brief time our lines of life shall run side by side; how soon they will separate, no one knows. I am trying to do you a service. It was for that that I sought you at the masquerade in Newport. I warned you of coming danger, but my warning did not save you from it."

"It was impossible to guard against the blows even with your warning. But, why have you sought me now? Are there more evils to fall upon me?"

"Yes, all my predictions have not been fulfilled," the White Witch answered.

"True, my fortune isn't all lost, but there's precious little left," Montgomery said, dryly.

"Your friend?"

"I have not yet proved him to be an enemy."

"That proof will be presented to you before the week is over," said the woman, quickly.

Montgomery was astonished.

"From whom do you receive this information?"

"I have already told you that to tell you would betray the one from whom I do receive it," replied the woman.

Montgomery felt that the affair was getting more and more mysterious.

"But, can you tell me one thing?"

"Ask; I will answer if I can," the veiled figure said.

"You told me at Newport that a certain lady would prove false to the vows that she had sworn to me," Montgomery said, with some little hesitation, for the subject was painful to him even now.

"Yes; were not my words true?"

"Too true," replied Montgomery, with a bitter accent. "What I would ask is: how did you know—or guess—that she would prove false to me?"

"Shall I tell you frankly?"

"Yes."

"Even if it gives you pain?"

"I can bear it; go on," Montgomery replied, firmly.

"Because she never loved you."

Montgomery, despite his self-control, winced at the words. It was not a pleasant thing to be told that the woman on whom he had lavished the purest and richest trea-



A JEALOUS WOMAN'S WORK.

"Dr. Storms! it is not too late? You are free?"

Then he smiled, so like the olden time, and went over to Ida; and Juno hid her face and ears while the two explained the wide, wide breach.

"Juno, I never can be too good to you," Ida said, when her lover had gone, and she threw her arms around the girl's neck.

"I can not see how you can as much as forgive me. But you do, I know?"

"Gladly; and only too content to accept this great, sudden joy at this hour."

So, all unconscious, Juno Burtleigh had brought together what her jealousy and wickedness had separated.

The White Witch: OR, THE LEAGUE OF THREE.

A STRANGE STORY OF AMERICAN LIFE.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN.
AUTHOR OF "HEART OF FIRE," "WOLF DEMON,"
"CARLETON," "ACE OF SPADES," ETC.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE WITCH APPEARS.

The hands of Montgomery's watch marked ten minutes to nine when he arrived at the Central Park gate on Fifty-ninth street, at the head of Seventh avenue.

A new moon, slowly rising in the dark skies, shed a dim light over the earth.

The night air was chilly, and Montgomery drew his light overcoat closer around him as he felt the cold fingers of the night breezes.

"It is nearly time for my mysterious lady to come," he muttered, as he paced up and down before the gateway. "Who can it be that takes such an interest in my fortunes? The knowledge that she possesses, too, seems marvelous. Why, the whole affair is more like a romantic fiction or a wild dream than sober reality."

Then a sudden thought occurred to Montgomery, and he paused in his walk and looked carefully around him.

"I wonder if the Englishman is here?" he said, as he looked in vain for the figure of his spy.

"I don't see him. He may be concealed in the shrubbery inside the Park, though. Perhaps it is better for the success of our plan that I should not know where he is. I might possibly defeat his purpose by some

"We are secure from observation here," she said.

Montgomery noticed that the tones of the woman were very low, barely above a whisper, and that she was evidently trying to disguise her natural voice.

The thought flashed across his mind that she must be known to him, else why should she be so cautious?

The woman had looked carefully around her when she halted. No one besides themselves were in sight, yet she had not spoken the truth when she said that no one observed them.

After the two had entered the gate and gone down the winding path, a man arose cautiously from behind a clump of bushes by the side of the path, that had concealed him from sight.

Quietly and carefully he followed in the footsteps of the two, tracking them as the wild beast tracks its prey, or the wily savage, on the western frontier, trails his victim.

The sound of the footsteps of the two, ringing out clear on the silence of the night, served as a guide to him.

The windings of the path concealed the pursuer from the pursued.

While the steps of the two resounded clearly on the still air, on the contrary, the man who followed moved like a ghost, and his steps fell upon the earth with all the stealth and silence of the cat.

Suddenly, the noise of the footsteps, that he was listening to so eagerly, ceased.

The watcher guessed at once that the two had halted.

With increased caution, bent almost double, he proceeded onward, keeping, as he moved, in the shade of the trees and bushes that lined the pathway.

Then, as he came to an abrupt turn of the path, he saw the figures of Montgomery and the veiled woman standing together, a hundred paces on.

The spy dropped upon his knees in the shadow of a tree.

For a moment he surveyed the scene before him. Then, as if having made up his mind as to the course that he should pursue, he left the path, and availing himself of the shelter afforded by the trees and bushes, he noiselessly, snake-like, stole, little by little, toward the spot where Montgomery and the veiled woman stood.

He advanced so cautiously, that the two had no suspicion that there was any one near them.

Within a dozen paces of the two, the spy found shelter under a bush, and there, crouched upon the ground like a huge toad,

"No, your words are true," Montgomery said, with a bitter accent.

"You have lost fortune, friend, and, dearer than either, the woman that you loved."

"To a certain extent, you are right. The love is utterly gone, and nearly all my fortune; but the friend—"

"Is a secret enemy?" said the woman, hastily. "He is one of the League of Three that are striking these terrible blows."

"The League of Three! yes, I remember now; you spoke of this league before, did you not?"

"Yes."

"But such a thing seems more like a fiction than a sober, living truth. Leagues are of the dark ages, when might made right and the strong arm held what the strong arm took."

"And has the world changed greatly since the age you speak of?" demanded the veiled woman. "No! the strong arm still holds what it forcibly takes. The hand of iron still exists, but modern civilization has covered it with a kid-glove. In the olden time, mailed knights, at the head of armed warriors, seized castles and cities; they won them amid the shock of arms, in battles; they called their stealing, glory. In modern days, the knights have turned into gentlemen in broadcloth, shining boots, diamond-pins, and kid-gloves; they seize railroads, city charters, and fat contracts; their armed hosts are smooth-tongued lawyers, venial office-holders, and a corrupt press. They work in the dark, and their stealing is called speculation. The world has not changed; it has only covered its ugly face with a mask. Angus Montgomery, believe me when I tell you that these three men have sworn to ruin you! Ask your own judgment if my words are improbable. Have you never heard of combinations? Are they not made in party politics every year? Can all these blows that have fallen so heavily upon your head be the result of accident alone?"

"No; it does not seem probable," Montgomery replied, slowly.

"I have spoken truth!" exclaimed the woman, firmly.

"But why do these three men hate me so bitterly?" Angus asked.

"Because you are in their way, and they seek to remove you from it."

"Tell me the names of the three?"

"I can not," the veiled woman said, slowly.

"And why not?"

"Because I—but do not ask me for reasons," the White Witch said, imploringly.

sure of his heart, never cared for him; but she bore it bravely.

The veiled woman noticed the quiver of his lips and the momentary look of pain that came over his face.

"I knew that the truth would give you pain," she said, softly, and with an accent of pity in her tones.

"Never mind; it's like the skillful surgeon cutting beyond the wound to make the cure complete," he replied, quietly.

"How could you know that she did not love me?"

"I can read her character in her face," replied the White Witch, slowly; and as she spoke, the thought occurred to Montgomery that the veiled woman was evading the question.

"In her face you read that she did not love me?" he queried.

"No, not that," replied the woman, "but in her face I read that she can not love any one, except herself. Her nature is a selfish one. It is not her fault. It was born in her. To love, one must have fire—passion. Think of Frances Chaucy's cold eyes; they are beautiful, but 'tis the beauty of colored glass; the fire that should give them life dwells not there. Another proof: her thin, passionate lips; and then, too, her wax-like face. Such a girl as she is can never love any one deeply. It is not in her. Angus, her cold, unsympathetic nature would chill your heart to ice, deaden the blood within your veins, and cause you to regret the day when you linked your fate with hers. Do not think that I would wrong her, even in thought, for Heaven knows that I have no wish to do so. You asked for the truth, and I have spoken it, perhaps, too freely."

"No, no!" he exclaimed.

"I have only obeyed your wish," she replied, simply.

"Yes, and I thank you for it; and now, what is the new danger that threatens me?"

"You have still some little portion of your fortune left?"

"Yes, a few thousands that I have saved from the wreck," Montgomery answered.

"Your foes strike at that next."

"Indeed, how?"

"That I can not tell you."

"Why not?"

"Because I do not know; the White Witch, you see, frankly confesses her ignorance. All that I know is that the League of Three intend to strike another blow at you. What have you left that they can strike at, except the little remnant of your fortune?" she asked.

"You have just now confessed that your wisdom does not extend to knowing everything," Montgomery said, quietly.

The veiled woman looked at him in wonder.

"I do not understand you," she said.

"Again the Witch is ignorant."

"You say that my fortune is all that I have left; you are wrong. I have something that I value more than I do the money."

"I guess what that is," said the White Witch, dryly.

"You do?"

"Yes, you mean that you are loved."

"Right, I am."

"A fatal love that will lead you to your ruin," the veiled woman said, gravely.

"No, you are wrong; it is a love that will make my future life happy beyond expression."

"You will not be warned?"

"Against her?"

"Yes, and still I am not deterred."

"Do you know the name of the lady that I refer to?"

"I can guess it," said the White Witch.

"Well, then, speak it. If you can guess her name, you are indeed a witch, for the secret of our love is known only to the lady and myself," said Montgomery, confidently.

"Leone!"

Montgomery uttered an exclamation of surprise. With wonder in his face, he gazed upon the mysterious woman.

"I can not understand this," he cried.

"Oh, Angus Montgomery, you are walking blindly into the snare! Your love for Leone is a broken reed; lean upon it and it will snap in twain," she said, bitterly.

"I confess your knowledge surprises me," he said, slowly, and in wonder.

"The knowledge of your love known only to yourself and the lady," said the woman, scornfully. "You are wrong. Lionel O'Connell knows that you love her and that she loves you."

"He does?" exclaimed Montgomery, stupefied at the news.

"Yes; and she told him."

"Ah! A sudden light flashed upon Montgomery's brain. 'From O'Connell, then, you procured your information?'"

"Perhaps," replied the White Witch, ambiguously.

"Perhaps, I am sure of it!" cried Montgomery.

"Well, there is no harm in her speaking of it. I am not ashamed of my love. This O'Connell is an old friend of hers; the only one, besides myself, that she has in this strange country. What is more natural than that she should confide her happiness to him?"

"Lionel O'Connell her friend?" and there was a peculiar expression in the tone of the veiled woman that grated harshly on Montgomery's ear.

"Yes, her friend," he replied.

"Is he not more than a friend? Question her and see if she will answer you?"

"The words of the mysterious woman cut like a knife-thrust to Montgomery's heart."

"How! would you dare to—?" and then he checked his impulsive speech.

"Well?" The White Witch looked at him, calmly.

"Pardon me, I was hasty," he said.

"Answer one question. Does not Leone love me?"

"Yes, better than she loves any thing in this world, and yet her love will bring you to your ruin. 'Tis to tell you this that I have seen you to-night. And now, farewell. If you are a gentleman, you will not follow me."

A moment and the woman was gone.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A SLIGHT MISTAKE.

MONTGOMERY gazed after the woman in astonishment.

A firm in the path, and the trees hid her from his sight.

Angus was strangely perplexed.

"This affair grows more and more mysterious!" he exclaimed, in wonder. "Who is this woman? I am sure that I know her. Her voice is familiar to me in spite of her efforts to disguise it. Whence comes this strange knowledge that she possesses of my affairs? By Jove! the whole thing seems more like a troubled dream than living truth."

truth. She warns me against Leone's love, yet she does not deny that she does love me. This is a riddle that I can not solve. Leone's love will bring me to ruin! Such was her warning. I have it!" he exclaimed, suddenly, as a thought flashed across his mind. "I will see Leone to-morrow. I will question her. She will speak the truth, I am sure."

Then a slight noise behind the bushes to the left of the path attracted Montgomery's attention.

"Hallo! there's some one there," he murmured. "Can it be a spy upon our conversation? Perhaps so. By Jove! I'll see who it is."

Acting at once upon the resolve, Montgomery cautiously approached the bushes from whence the noise had come.

All now was still.

As Montgomery advanced, he caught sight of a skulking figure some fifty paces from the clump of bushes. The back of the man was toward him, and he was stealing along cautiously, apparently dogging the White Witch.

"'Tis as I thought," muttered Montgomery, as his eyes fell upon the figure of the man who had evidently been concealed behind the bushes. "This man has played the spy and overheard our conversation. He is now following this mysterious woman. In turn, I'll follow him. He is here for no good. I'll learn his errand, and who sent him on it, or I'll strangle him. I'll get on ahead and surprise him as he goes through the archway."

Montgomery proceeded at once to carry out his resolution.

Bending round in a wide circle he gained the side of the archway facing southward.

The little path swept down into a hollow, and a road carried over it in the hollow, formed the archway.

The mouth of the archway was quite dark.

When Montgomery reached his post, the dark form of the White Witch had just disappeared around the angle of the path leading to the gate.

"This fellow has little idea that he is waited for," Montgomery muttered, as he nerved himself to spring upon the man who was following the woman so cautiously.

Montgomery was in a fever of nervous excitement. There is a subtle charm in a man-hunt to all whose blood courses freely in their veins.

Listening intently, Montgomery heard the stealthy steps of the spy stealing through the darkness of the archway.

Nearer and nearer came the steps.

Montgomery nerved himself for the coming struggle. Each muscle in his frame seemed turned into steel. Naturally vigorous, and possessed of more than common strength, he had little fear of the approaching contest. Besides, he had on his side the advantage of the surprise. And he had noted, too, even with the slight glimpse that he had caught of the spy, that he was not a very formidable antagonist, or at least, Montgomery judged so from his appearance.

The hollow sound of the man's footsteps grew louder and louder.

The spy was near at hand.

A dark figure came from the gloom of the vaulted way.

With the spring of the panther, leaping upon its prey, Montgomery sprang upon the spy.

Taken by surprise, the unknown was hurled to the earth, while over him bent Montgomery, his strong hands grasping him by the throat.

A moment only did Montgomery enjoy his advantage, the product of surprise; for, with a snake-like motion, the unknown wriggled himself out of Montgomery's grip, and with a sudden twist, rolled the young man from off his breast. Desperately Montgomery grappled with his antagonist. The young man was far superior to the other in strength, but not in the wiles of the wrestler's art.

Another snake-like movement, another twist, and Montgomery sprawled over on the earth, while his unknown foe, profiting by his advantage, placed his knee on the young man's breast, and catching him by the collar, twisted his knuckles in his throat in a very dexterous manner, that threatened to strangle Montgomery, off-hand.

"Well, now you've got it, ain't you?" gazed the unknown, whose heavy breathing gave visible proof of how desperate the struggle had been and what exertions he had made.

When Montgomery heard the voice of the unknown he would have uttered an exclamation of surprise had not the iron knuckles of the other, pressing, lever-like, in his throat, forbade the utterance.

The unknown noticed the start of surprise that Montgomery made, and thought it an indication that he was about to renew the struggle. He did not fully realize how complete his victory was.

"Don't try that on!" exclaimed the unknown, sternly. "You're bigger than I am, but I've got a little weapon here that makes us even; perhaps it gives me a little advantage."

And as the stranger spoke he drew a revolver from his pocket and leveled it at the head of the young man.

Again Montgomery tried to speak, and the unknown, now guessing his intention, removed his knuckles from his throat.

"Pipgan!" exclaimed the young man.

Pipgan—for the spy was no other than the Englishman—uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"Hollo! Who's this that knows me?"

Then he looked sharply into Montgomery's face.

"Mr. Montgomery?" the Englishman cried, in astonishment.

Removing his knee from the young man's breast, he assisted him to rise.

"Well, jigger my buttons!" Pipgan said, in utter amazement. "I never should have dreamed it was you."

"I saw you following the woman, and thinking that you were a spy, hired by some one to watch us, I determined to find out who and what you were," Montgomery said, recovering his breath.

"And that was the reason that you pounced onto me, eh?" said Pipgan, replacing his revolver in his pocket as he spoke.

"Yes, I couldn't imagine who it was, so I fought all I knew how."

"I never should have guessed that you possessed such strength," said Montgomery, looking at the apparently slender form of the Englishman in astonishment.

"I ain't the strength, sir," replied Pipgan. "I'm a wrestler, and you ain't. That's where I had the advantage. But, it was the toughest job that I've had for many a day."

"You overheard the interview between this mysterious woman and myself?"

"Every word."

"What do you think of it?" asked Montgomery, anxiously.

"I'll tell you better when I find out who she is," replied Pipgan, ambiguously.

"You are going to follow her, then?"

"Yes."

"But she requested me not to follow her."

"Yes; I heard her, but I am not you."

"No, but you are acting for me."

"The idea is just here, Mr. Montgomery. I think that this woman speaks the truth about the League of Three. If I can find out who she is, perhaps I can find out also where she gets her information about you. You've got powerful enemies, and all means are fair to beat 'em," said the Englishman, impatiently.

"Your words can not be disputed," Montgomery said, thoughtfully.

"But if you say give up the chase, give it up it is. 'Obey orders, though you break owners,' was always my motto."

"You think, then, that you can hunt this woman down?"

"If I don't, you can take my head and bite it as a cabbage!" cried Pipgan, emphatically.

"But, come, decide, quick; the woman will get out of the way; we are losing valuable time."

"Go; use your own judgment," cried Montgomery, hastily.

"That's the ticket!" Pipgan responded, in joy. "The Englishman had the instincts of the blood-hound in his nature. 'Where can I find you to-morrow at twelve?'"

"At the Fifth Avenue Hotel."

"All correct."

And Pipgan again followed on the trail.

But, as he had said, precious minutes had been lost.

The Englishman hurried on without caution now, but when he arrived at the Park gate, the woman was not to be seen.

Eagerly Pipgan looked up and down Fifty-ninth street, but nowhere could he distinguish the dark form of the mysterious woman whom he was in search of.

"Just as I expected!" he muttered in disgust. "She's given me the slip, and it's all his fault. Why on earth couldn't he have guessed that it was me that was tracking the woman? Blow the luck!"

Pipgan's rage attracted the attention of the Park policeman who was in the little sentry-house by the gate.

"'P'hat the devil's the matter, wid yees?" said the policeman, in a rich brogue that betrayed the Connaught man in every word, as he emerged from his shelter and approached the enraged Englishman.

"Oh!" and a brilliant idea occurred to Pipgan. "I say, my friend, did you notice a woman in dark clothes come through the gate a moment ago?"

"Is it a woman, now?" said the policeman, reflectively.

"Yes, a woman."

"An' she had dark clothes?"

"Yes."

"'P'hat the devil should I tell yees for if I did see her?" demanded the policeman, arrogantly.

Pipgan saw that deception was necessary.

"The fact is, I think that she is a friend of mine that I used to know. I passed her a little while ago in the Park, but she had her face all muffled up in a veil so that I'm not sure. I wouldn't mind standing a trifle if you can tell me which way she went."

"You would?"

"Yes."

"How much?"

"But did you see which way she went?"

"Faith an' I did," said the policeman with a wink.

"I'll give a dollar to know," and Pipgan drew a bill from his wallet.

"A dollar is it?"

The policeman pocketed it, quickly.

"Do yees see that car a-goin' down the avenue?" and as he spoke he pointed down Seventh Avenue.

"The one with the red light?"

"Yes."

"She took that car?"

"She did that same, be bad!"

"Thank you!" said Pipgan, hastily, and he started off on a run down the avenue in chase of the car.

The policeman watched him with a grin. "A good legs he has of his own; it's well he runs!" said a woman who had noticed to-night, at all, at all; and with a broad grin on his face the guardian of the Park returned to his sentry-house.

Pipgan ran after the car at the top of his speed. He had no suspicion that the policeman had deceived him.

But luck was on the side of the Englishman, for the veiled woman had actually got into the very car that the policeman had pointed out.

The horses attached to the car were proceeding at a sharp trot, so that Pipgan was compelled to use all his strength to overtake the object of his pursuit.

Pipgan came up with the car when it halted at the stables to change horses.

A single glance and he saw that the veiled woman was in the car.

Congratulating himself on his success, the Englishman got on the rear platform.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE PURSUIT.

THE car started and the Englishman employed himself in examining the veiled woman.

Completely concealed as she was by the waterproof cloak that she wore, Pipgan gained but little knowledge by his examination.

She was young; he was convinced of that. There was a certain graceful outline to the slender form that even the dark cloak could not conceal.

The thick veil masked her face from observation.

The Englishman watched her as a cat watches a mouse. Not a motion of the disguised unknown could escape his searching eyes.

After a while the conductor passed through the car collecting the fares.

When the veiled woman opened her pocket-book, and gave the conductor the coin, the keen eyes of Pipgan noticed the little, white hand. It was a peculiar hand, long and slender and white as the driven snow, and on one of the slender fingers shone a ring.

Pipgan thanked his lucky stars. Here was a clue at last.

In his eagerness, the Englishman had pressed his gaze close to the glass of the car window. The masker happened to look in his direction. She saw the face pressed against the glass, the keen eyes fixed upon her, and she gave a slight start.

Pipgan noticed the movement, saw that he was detected and mentally cursed his own stupidity.

He did not allow the woman, however, to see that he knew she had discovered that she was watched.

Carelessly, he turned his attention to another passenger, who sat on the other side of the car; then, after a while, he took his face from the window, and retired to the rear of the platform. There, he leaned against the iron rail and speculated upon the chances.

"She saw me, that's plain enough," he muttered; "but, does she suspect that I'm watching her? that's the question."

And as he put the query he noticed that the woman was looking toward the end of the car as if in search of him.

"She's suspicious," he murmured, as he saw this movement. "She's looking after me, that's evident enough. She can't elude me, but I don't want her to suspect that she is watched. If she discovers that she is, it may block my little game. I don't see how it can, very well, but still it may; there's no telling."

Then Pipgan—metaphorically—put on his thinking cap.

"I've got the idea! I've tumbled to it!" he cried suddenly, scratching his nose thoughtfully as he spoke. "The next time the car stops, I'll change my base of operations and get on the front platform. She won't be apt to think of looking for me there."

Mentally, Pipgan shook hands with himself at the brilliant idea, which he proceeded to put into operation the next time the car stopped to take on a passenger.

Gaining the front platform, Pipgan again kept a watchful eye upon his game.

The woman moved uneasily in her seat. She had evidently noticed the absence of the man who had attracted her attention, and, instead of quieting her fears, his sudden disappearance had augmented them.

Pipgan saw all this and mused upon the cause.

"She ain't a bit easy," he murmured. "Why should a stranger just squinting at her, worry her so?" It was a difficult question to answer, and though the Englishman in his time had solved many a riddle, this one puzzled him. "My disappearance ought to quiet her; but, she is evidently alarmed."

The car was crossing Sixth avenue when the veiled woman made a motion to the conductor to stop.

The watchful eyes of Pipgan saw the movement.

Another move in the game, eh?" he muttered.

The car stopped and the woman alighted. Pipgan remained on the car, but kept his eyes on the person. She proceeded to the sidewalk, turned into the side-street, and disappeared.

This was the moment for the Englishman to act. He jumped from the car and hurried up Broadway. When he reached the corner of the street down which the woman had turned, she was not to be seen!

Pipgan cogitated for a moment. He knew that it was clearly impossible for her to have walked the block that intervened between Broadway and the next avenue in the little time that had elapsed. Therefore, it was plain she must have entered one of the houses in the block.

"Well, now, I didn't expect that my bird was going to take shelter here," he muttered. Then he shook his head sagely. "It won't do!" and he chuckled as he spoke; "it's a very clever trick, but I ain't to be thrown off the scent so easy. She's concealed in the street somewhere, in some dark doorway. She's got an idea that she is followed, and she wants to be certain of it. If I stay here, she may get out the other way. She could glide along in the shadow of the houses without my seeing her, maybe."

After a moment's thinking for a moment, the Englishman made up his mind.

"I'll walk through the street; then I can discover if she is concealed in any of the doorways. It's dark; I don't think that she would be apt to recognize me."

But as the Englishman came to this conclusion, he detected a female form approaching on the other side of the street.

Pipgan was standing in a deep shadow cast by a projecting doorway.

"Jigger my buttons!" he cried, in delight; "it's my bird. She crossed over to the other side, doubled on her track, and he came back. Oh, you're smart, but you haven't thrown me off the scent, my little dear!"

Pipgan crouched close to the wall.

The woman came swiftly along. From the searching glances that she cast around it was evident that she was on the alert.

Thanks to the darkness, Pipgan escaped observation.

The veiled woman crossed Broadway, proceeded down the street to Sixth avenue, and took a car there.

Pipgan, at a safe distance in the rear, followed her. He saw the woman get on board the car, and when the car started, Pipgan was on the front platform, chuckling quietly at his success.

"No more rear platforms for me!" he muttered; "my lady-bird don't get her eyes on me again this night, if I know myself, and I think I do."

The spy kept his eyes upon the veiled woman. He did not intend that she should escape him.

She made no attempt to leave the car, but rode all the way down to the Astor House.

blood, rode to the left of the group in one body.

"I can't hear the niggers," said Mo, suddenly.

At the same moment the Shawnees halted, as if to listen. Not a sound could be heard. The pursued seemed to have suddenly disappeared, as if swallowed up in the earth.

Several of the Shawnees dismounted, and sunk down upon the earth, both to listen and to try to distinguish the motion of anything on the prairie. In this position, on a flat plain, the movement of the smallest animal becomes visible to the eye of the watcher.

For some minutes the men could see nothing; upon which they scattered across the plain, prying and scrutinizing every indication, however slight, of the probable presence of the Avengers.

A low cry from one of the scouts soon brought the whole band to his side.

The simplicity of the trick which had been played them, caused yells of rage to escape the lips of the savages, while the five bandits cursed and swore fearfully.

There was a kind of gully or hollow traversing the plain for about half a mile, and here Kenewa by a sign had made all his party halt, and then dismount.

Each man then took his horse by the head, and walking quite leisurely, turned off to the left, thus completely deceiving the pursuers for at least ten minutes, which served the two-fold purpose of giving the horses time to breathe and of getting a start of the foe.

The end of the valley reached, they all again mounted and rode off as before.

But now all began to suffer from intolerable thirst, while the horses drooped and stumbled. The rough ride over the stony plain, at the killing pace first adopted, was rapidly telling upon them; but there was no help for it.

Black Ella had not turned a hair, but was as fresh and lively as ever.

Suddenly there was a cry. One of the horses had fallen to rise no more.

Roland at once saw that it was the steed that bore Ettie, who, however, with marvelous presence of mind, contrived to disengage herself without being hurt.

Roland merely held out his hand, and next minute the young girl was seated in front of him on his magnificent steed.

"How far now?" asked Roland, as he rode up to the guide.

"See," replied Kenewa, pointing ahead.

Roland peered through the gloom, and saw something dark looming in the distance.

Then the horses seemed suddenly to revive; they noticed their merges as if quite fresh, and without an effort on the part of their riders, they dashed over the stony plain.

"Smell water," said Kenewa.

Roland nodded. He had enough to do now to restrain his noble horse, which bore its double burden as if it had been a feather, seeming also carried away by the agency which had suddenly roused the slower and heavier steeds to fresh efforts.

Soon it became a race, a regular stampede, the horses having the complete mastery.

Then came a green and grassy slope, at the bottom of which lay something white and silvery, and next minute the faded animals were plunged to the girths in the sweet water of a large pool or fountain at the foot of the Pilot Rock.

As soon as the first rage of thirst was appeased the men drew their steeds away, and at a signal from Kenewa they followed him some hundred yards further, where they could prepare to receive the enemy with some chance of success.

The place selected by the Huron was at the foot of the rock, where a small bank surrounded a slight hollow. Behind this was a perfect inclosure of rock, in which the horses were placed.

Then all took up positions, and leaning on their rifles prepared for the coming onslaught.

The Pilot Rock, now that they approached it nearer, was clearly defined. It was a majestic, tall, rugged, uneven column of stone, rearing its lofty and storm-beaten head from a broad, level valley. It stood forth boldly from the level plain, rearing its cedar-crowned head, all green, and young, and lovely, as if in the spring-tide of youth, although as old as the world itself, and shooting its rugged summit several hundred feet above the level surface of the green valley stretching in every direction around it.

At its base the Pilot Rock covered some two acres of ground, running up in pyramidal form nearly two hundred feet, and leaving an area on the summit of almost an acre. This area was entirely bare and without vegetation, with the exception of a few dwarf pines and cedars, and here and there the green mosses clothed the exposed points of the rugged and broken stones scattered thickly around, as if to protect them from the blasts of winter.

The Pilot Rock, with its rugged and broken sides covered and hidden by pines, cedars, and wild vines, presented to the wandering eye, during the summer, an immense, gigantic column of green waving vegetation, picturesque and dreamlike—a scene rarely, if ever, surpassed in wild beauty.

Such was the spot selected by Kenewa to make a stand against the superior forces which were to attack them.

They had not been long in position when the moon rose clear and bright, flooding the vast rock, the plain and pool with light. Every object was now clearly visible, and in time, for on their hands and knees, the five bandits, followed by twenty red-skins, were creeping up in the shadow of the rock, and in another two minutes there would have been a hand-to-hand conflict.

A sudden volley from every one of the Avengers at once proclaimed that they were not to be surprised.

The Indians at once turned and fled, their white associates with heavy curses following their example. Four had to be carried away dying or severely wounded, and for a moment the fight was over.

But even the least experienced of the whites knew that the red-skins had only retired to prepare for another rush.

It was evident, however, that a consultation was going forward; for while twenty picked warriors were left on guard, the rest retired to a distance, and held a kind of council of war.

The men left to watch pursued singular tactics. Stopping 50 as to prevent scarcely any mark to the enemy, they rode in line in front of the besieged, each man discharging his arrow as he passed, and each time that he passed coming nearer and nearer to the rock.

Roland seemed to suspect their maneuver, which appeared to be to creep gradually nearer and nearer, when a rush might put

them in possession of the besieged position. In a low whisper he directed each Avenger to pick out his man, and a general volley was fired.

The wounded and discomfited enemy at once made a hasty retreat, and joined their fellows.

The garrison breathed again.

For quite twenty minutes there was silence on the plain, and then the tactics of the white ruffians and their red-skin associates became visible. They all had dismounted, and formed into three distinct columns, two of which so posted themselves as to keep up a terrible cross-fire on the position of their foes, while the third prepared to dash to the assault.

For two or three minutes the volley of guns and arrows was terrific, and then, a fearful war-whoop waking the echoes of the hills, the center column rushed headlong to the attack, evidently resolved to take the position by storm.

Not an answering shot came.

A woe-struck, the desperadoes rushed up the bank, and entered the hollow but a few minutes before held by the Avenging Angels.

It was silent and deserted.

"Absquatulated," roared Mo: "but where? They can't be far off."

"We had better wait for daylight," replied one of the brothers: "they're hid in the rocks somewhere about."

This, in their wearied state, seemed indeed the best policy; and in a few minutes the whole party lay within sight of the Pilot Rock, in eager anticipation of the morn.

But, when it came, and they had searched the whole country round, not the faintest sign of the opposite party could be seen—they had disappeared as if by magic.

When Kenewa saw that the Indians had retired to confer, and from his knowledge of their habits was convinced that no further attack need be apprehended for some time, he bade every one follow him, and slowly and cautiously skirting the base of the rock, they stood at the foot of the cascade.

All followed implicitly, the women by this time convinced that in the Huron chief all their hopes centered.

Kenewa bade them wait a moment and watch him.

Then he darted under the broad sheet of water formed by the cascade, and in ten minutes more emerged on the opposite side, wending his way along a ledge of rocks to the summit of the cliff.

Roland, who held Ettie by the hand—the stern father never left the side of Ella—followed his example, and found himself standing on a broad, solid stone. The rock over which the water poured, instead of being a smooth, perpendicular wall, as it appeared to the spectator, was in the shape of a crescent, with the two ends pointing on shore, and the entire half-circle covered by a thin sheet of falling water.

Having ascended a little path leading to the top of the cascade, they followed Kenewa and entered the creek, now hemmed in on either side with immense cliffs: a solid, perpendicular, unbroken wall of gray limestone, eighty feet high, worn away and formed by the continual friction of the waters during a period of hundreds or perhaps thousands of years.

Presently they passed an old beech tree, which had taken root in a little strip of soil extending along the side of the cliff, and which had grown to a great height, immediately against the bare sides of the lofty rock.

Here Kenewa bade the whole party halt a moment, while Roland and he, with the two laborers, led the horses up-stream.

This they did for some distance, until they came to a low fissure in the rock, about tall enough for a man to enter. It was apparently the mouth of a spring running from the cave to the main channel.

Inside was a spacious and dry cave, admirably suited for the purposes of a stable, especially as a couple of poles prevented all exit on the part of the animals.

"What a splendid cave," said Roland.

"Yes," replied Kenewa, sadly: "when the sun and moon and stars were young, people knew of it—it was sacred; but now it is a secret no longer, for the pale-faces are here."

Roland made no reply. He fully understood the deep reluctance of the red-skin to betray the mystery of his tribe.

"But Manitou knows best; in a hundred moons the hungry long-knives will dwell in the land, the red-skins will be driven from their hunting-grounds, their bones will whiten the land; and what will their eyes not peer out?" he added, in a melancholy tone.

Returning the way they came, Kenewa showed his companions a narrow, winding path in the side of the cliff, up which the whole party went in Indian file, until, one by one, they disappeared through the opening of a cavern which, when entered, proved to be some twenty by thirty feet long, with a floor of smooth, solid stone, while the ceiling, rugged and uneven, and ornamented by a few stalactites, exhibited the white points of the limestone, reflecting with remarkable brilliancy the pine torches, which were immediately lighted.

Proceeding through a low narrow passage they soon reached another room, circular in shape, with a dome-like roof, and caverns leading further into the bowels of the earth.

Kenewa pointed to some piles of dry grass, and intimated that he intended this as the sleeping-room of the ladies.

He then retired, all imitating his example, and seeking repose in the outer cave, whence, however, such necessities as had been brought with them, had been first carried to the inner room.

The Indian now bade all seek in slumber that refreshment they so much needed, while he would act as sentry.

The man's nerves appeared made of iron. No sooner did he see that all slept, than, clutching his rifle and tomahawk, he prepared to leave the cavern, in order to spy out the motions of the enemy. He was soon at the foot of the cliff and descending the stream.

Again he passed under the water, but instead of going back to the post they had held for some time against the foe, he entered upon a narrow path leading to the summit of the Pilot Rock.

The way was steep and difficult, but the Indian knew the path.

In ten minutes he was crawling over the last boulder that stood in his way.

He was on the summit of the extraordinary rock; but he was not alone.

CHAPTER IX.
THE WATCHERS OF THE NIGHT.

He was not alone.

The summit of the Pilot Rock, though

lighter than the plain below, was still to a certain extent enveloped in darkness, and thus admitted of a man's moving about unnoticed, if he made no noise.

Kenewa took in at one glance the exact state of affairs.

Jagged and rugged, but to a certain extent level, the surface of this singular pillar of earth and stone was crowned by cedars, three of which grew on the edge of the cliff opposite where Kenewa stood, while near to him there was a clump, within which it was possible for him to conceal himself effectually. But this was not his design.

With their backs to him, on the very verge of the precipice, were two men, evidently watchers of the night, both of whom the young Huron fancied he recognized at a glance, as the chief leaders of the party of murderers and assassins by whom they were environed. Now Kenewa knew well enough that the head men of a band of braves on the war-trail do not take up the position of sentries, unless with some ulterior motive—and that ulterior motive was easy to guess.

They were in conference as to their future plans; and as a knowledge of their tactics would be useful in the highest degree, Kenewa determined to be present at the interview.

Depositing his rifle in a safe place, and seeing that his knife and tomahawk were ready for use, the Huron brave stooped, and then lay flat upon the earth, so that if even the quick-eyed sentries heard any sound, they could by no possibility see anything of him, except by a careful examination of the ground.

His motions were now like those of a serpent. He wriggled forward rather than crept, advancing always, but never hurrying; always creeping in the shade of any lumps of earth or piles of stone that came in his way. In ten minutes he was so close to the sentries as to hear their voices distinctly, though as yet unable to distinguish the words.

Kenewa now saw that the three cedars which grew close together were about four feet from the edge of the cliff, and he perceived that the two men were seated with their backs to them. Slowly, without the creaking of a joint or the rustling of a leaf, the Huron rose to an upright position, and leaned against one of the cedars, without the faintest indication of his presence being given to the night-watchers.

Then he knew that he was right.

That hideous countenance, more scarred by villainy than hardships, is that of Moses Home, chief bandit of the Scioto. The other is an Indian: tall, muscular, with gloomy visage, made hideous by the strange pictorial devices of the red-skins.

A kind of instinct, that thrills like a shiver through the frame, told Kenewa that this was the bandit, the Black Hawk of the Shawnees, his hereditary and inveterate foe, a man whose reputation for cruelty and cunning was a by-word even among the savages of the North American continent.

The conjunction of these two evil genies boded no good to the fugitives concealed within the hollows of the neighboring hills.

"It beats my comprehension," said Mo, in the low, hushed voice with which we so often speak in the stillness of night, "how these people have concealed themselves."

"They are not spirits, to fly through the air," replied the chief, in tones so deep and guttural that the listener started.

"I don't say they are, but curse me, if I can make the whole thing out," continued Moses Home, who was evidently more puzzled than he liked to own, even to himself.

"Talking is useless," said the Black Hawk; "my young men will find their track in the morning. If they have perched like eagles, we will follow up; if they have burrowed like owls, we will dig them out. The dog of a Huron knows some hiding-places hereabout, which, when the sunbeams gild the prairies, will be but as the hole of a fox."

"Curse the Huron. If he hadn't guarded his friends so well we should not have been interrupted."

The brow of the Shawnee chief grew dark and threatening, and he spoke not for two or three minutes, occupying the interval in filling up his tomahawk pipe with the choicest of kinneh-kinneh, which then he lighted by means of a flint and steel, with dried tree-fungus for tinder. Mo, who understood Indian customs well, imitated his example, and when the pipes were in full play, the two men sat still about five minutes, gazing out upon the dark and gloomy plain below, where, however, gleamed the camp-fires of their companions.

All else beyond and around seemed one vast black abyss, overhung by eternal night.

"My braves look at me with lowering brows," suddenly began the chief; "they have a cloud of blood before their eyes; they can not see. They have fought and bled for the long-knives—where is the promised reward?"

"Indian," said Moses, keeping his temper as well as his nature would allow him, "I reckon it ain't my fault if Kenewa and the other devils came up and spoiled our game. I tell you I know the judge is rich, that he could fill large coffers with gold, that he could supply a whole tribe with powder and blankets, and then not feel it."

"But where is all this wealth of which my brother speaks?" says the wary and suspicious Indian.

"I do not know, nor do I care. But I know the key that will unlock the secret."

"My brother speaks in a cunning way, which a Shawnee can not understand," said Black Hawk.

"Well, it's my determination at any price to secure the old man's daughters," began Mo, in a slow and deliberate tone.

Kenewa mechanically placed his hand upon the handle of his tomahawk.

"My ears are open," observed Black Hawk, seeing that the other paused.

"One of 'em ain't much use to no one, seeing the little affair of the other night kinder made her mad. But men is such fools: I dare say he thinks as much of this one as of plump, laughing Miss Ettie of the golden hair."

The Indian bowed his head, with a sneer on his face. All Indians respect those bereft of reason, and treat them with indulgence.

"Howsoever," continued Mo, "my game is to get the two girls into my possession, and then if the old man don't come down handsome, he's not the fool I take him to be."

"Well?" said the Indian, coldly.

"Darn my old stockings," cried the bandit of the Scioto, in a half angry tone, "ain't that all clear enough?"

"Yes," replied Black Hawk, placing his

right hand on the other's arm, "clear enough for the long-knives, but not clear enough for the warriors of the great Shawnee race."

"Well, I'm fair and above board; speak, and let me know what you and your warriors want."

"Hostages for the treasure that is to be divided among us," replied the Shawnee, significantly.

"Eh?" cried Mo.

"Listen," said Black Hawk, "an Indian has but one word; his tongue is not forked, neither does he depart from a promise made. Give the maidens into my hands, and when the treasure is fairly divided they are yours. While in my wigwam, Black Hawk will forget that he has eyes. The pale-face girls shall be treated as Shawnee girls."

The robber mused. He was too well acquainted with the wiles of the race, he was in alliance with, not to have strong doubts as to the policy of what was asked. But what was he to do? He was to a certain extent in the power of the Shawnee chief, as did he turn against the bandits, they would have, but little chance. It was, therefore, with every appearance of manly frankness that he replied:

"My brother is very kind, and Mo accepts the hospitality of the Shawnee camp for the girl who is to be his wife."

Ah! if Moses had known how near death he was when he used that word he would certainly have shuddered!

By an almost irrepressible impulse, Kenewa, his dark face flashing with rage and indignation, clutched his tomahawk and raised it on high. To brain the white villain and then engage in mortal combat with the mighty Shawnee warrior, the savage of the Dark and Bloody Ground, would have been the work of an instant.

But at the same instant the sound of several other voices close at hand caused him to merge all thoughts into considerations of personal safety.

Sinking quietly and stealthily on the ground, he glided with bated breath to the shelter of a bush, which effectually screened him, while still allowing him to hear what passed.

"My brother would make the white girl his squaw?"

"Yes," replied Moses.

"But how, then, will he get the treasure?"

"Never mind. I'll get the ransom and give up the girl; but cuss me for a tame owl if I don't steal her again before they get back to the settlements. There ain't many white women in these parts, and seeing it is not likely we'd dare go pick and choose in the settlement, why, I means to keep the lot."

The savage smiled as if admiring the other's cunning, but had Moses Home been able to analyze the general expression of the other's face, he might not have been quite so well satisfied, and might have suspected that all his own jesuitry and art were to be met by corresponding qualities of the same nature in others.

The new-comers, whom the night-watchers turned to greet, were three in number: two Indians and one of the brothers, who, unable to sleep from pain, had come up the hill with the relief sentries to make a change. They were soon in a group together, but none seemed inclined to move, all being evidently interested in the subject of their whispered conversation.

Kenewa was now placed in a position of considerable danger. He knew that, sheltered by the bush, he might crawl to the eastern edge of the cliff, and probably escape that way; but one fact militated against this otherwise very natural proceeding.

His rifle was hid in the cedar clump to the northward, and for an Indian to retreat with loss of arms was a disgrace to which he was not likely to submit.

This much-prized rifle, the gift of Judge Mason, must at any price be recovered.

Thus the secret reason for which Kenewa had visited the Pilot Rock was as yet unaccomplished.

The five men were carrying on a loud desultory conversation about recent events, and were chiefly leaning against the cedars, smoking. Kenewa's glittering eyes were never taken off their countenances for one moment. He saw Moses draw forth his flint and steel for a fresh light and strike it.

As he did so, there was a general start in the group, and all listened.

Kenewa lay like a statue.

"If there wasn't an echo," said the younger Home, with an oath, "I'm a deaf 'un."

"I thought I heard something," replied Moses, quietly, "but it was, as you say, just the echo."

And, as if quite reassured, the five men again leaned their backs against the trees, with their faces to the south.

Their backs were all to Kenewa, and all were smoking.

Then a small flame from dry leaves and grass flickered in the night wind, a number of sticks were cast on, and a fire arose on the summit of the Pilot Rock, which in an instant communicated itself to the drier inflammable bush behind which he was concealed.

With wild execrations Moses, rushed furiously in the direction of the bush, from behind which the shadowy figure of the Indian could be seen disappearing. "In the foul fiend's name, what devilry is this?"

The Shawnee made no reply, but darted in pursuit, leaving the two wounded white men to put out the fire, which purpose was soon effected.

Kenewa had fired his beacon on the Pilot Rock.

The young Huron, as soon as his singular purpose had been effected, took to his heels, in the direction of the cedar grove, quite satisfied that in the darkness he had nothing to fear but the chances of a stray shot, which the wary Indians were not very likely to throw away. The surprise of all at this sudden burst of light necessarily gave him a minute's start, which he used to such good purpose, that scarcely had the Shawnees caught sight of him before he disappeared in the cedar grove on the north side of the hill.

"My young men will guard the path," said Black Hawk, pointing to the only way of exit from the summit of the rock: "I and the pale-faces will seek the spy."

Moses and his brother Mike now came lumbering up, and it was their advice at once to search the thicket thoroughly.

Five minutes had now elapsed.

Just as this resolve was come to, the moon, hitherto concealed behind dark and impenetrable clouds that, as it were, veiled heaven from earth, burst forth in all her virgin beauty.

The form of every tree-trunk was now visible. Not a place in which a dog could have concealed himself could be detected.

Every corner of the thicket was, however, searched, the edge of the cliff peered over, but nowhere was a sign of Kenewa to be seen.

A murmur of surprise from the Indians, a volley of oaths from the white men, greeted this discovery.

He was not upon the summit of the Pilot Rock, that was quite certain. A search of ten minutes satisfied them of that.

"And yet," said Mo, "I think a sentry at the bottom of the path won't do no harm. I'm darned if this ain't like magic, I declare."

The Indian warriors and the white men now sauntered down the path from the hill-top, conversing by the way of the beacon fire, and the mysterious hand which had lighted it.

Five minutes elapsed, and all was still and silent as the grave, on the mysterious summit of the Pilot Rock.

Then, from the naked edge of a line of rock on the eastern side, came up a haggard face, which few would have recognized as that of the young Indian warrior. The face was followed by the shoulders, but the body rose no more.

With a look of utter despair, that took in every minute point of the scene around, the shoulders disappeared, and the face alone remained.

It was as the face of a man in the agonies of death's last struggle.

Then a dark frown passed over the young warrior's countenance, as with a kind of spring he leaped upward, and by a superhuman effort, landed with his breast upon the edge of the rock, his legs and the lower part of the body hanging over the precipitous cliff.

He lay prostrate, his heavy breathing plainly distinguishable, for nearly ten minutes, so utterly exhausted was he by his exertions.

When Kenewa found that he had, in the thicket, to undergo the searching investigation which was sure to follow his discovery, he knew full well that no ordinary effort on his part would save him.

Eightfold was determined not to fall into the hands of his ferocious enemies alive.

He would die, but he would die in such a way that they should not even have the opportunity of taking his scalp.

Rushing to the edge of the cliff, he peered over to see if there were even the slightest chance of descending it.

Nothing but an eagle or other bird of prey could have scaled or descended that height.

But five feet from the edge of the cliff was a slight projection about six inches in width. There were inequalities in the face of the cliff.

Without a word, without hesitation, Kenewa slipped over, placed his feet firmly on the ledge, and clinging with outstretched arms, to a couple of stone knobs, remained, during the search, flattened against the limestone rock.

Just as the search commenced he had fixed himself into his position. By sliding off the edge of the cliff he had been able to reach the ledge of rock, and there rest his feet, while with his hands he grasped two slightly projecting knobs of rock.

And there he hung, by this frail tenure, over the dark abyss.

For a little while, his eyes being cast upward, and his blood flowing freely, the position, though desperate in the extreme, was not so trying as it might have been to a man of more sensitive nerves; but just as the bandits and the Indians began their search, a terrible sensation came over him—one that caused his heart to leap as it were to his throat.

His hands, stretched out to their utmost limit above the level of his head, began to lose sensation, to be utterly numbed and useless.

It was absolutely necessary to lower one. But the other was comparatively useless, and yet on that trail power of holding, life wholly depended.

The young Indian, despite his stoic courage, felt his breath come and go hotly and heavily: the over-balancing of an inch was death.

Slowly and by degrees, sensation came back to the lowered hand, and as with it he clutched again a projecting piece of rock, the other fell like a lump of lead by his side.

Then the search was over, and Kenewa had to clamber to the summit of the rock or perish.

To do this seemed impossible, and indeed would have been wholly so but for one fortunate circumstance, which at first Kenewa had not fully considered. The face of the rock from the ledge to the edge sloped slightly inward, so that when, in the moment of the last desperate struggle for existence, Kenewa saw that he must restore his hands and arms to their normal state, he was able to lie flat on the rock for a minute or two without the aid of his hands.

No sooner, therefore, was the proper circulation restored to his arms, than he made the desperate and successful effort which we have already recorded, and some few minutes later stood erect upon the summit of the Pilot Rock—this time alone.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 55.)

THE "American Piano."

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SONNET TO A MULE.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

Thou art no bird of heavenly plumage fair,
That sail'st on lightsome wings through lambent
air.
Thy morning warble rings not from the skies
To greet our ears ere we have open'd eyes.
Thou art, I guess, no gifted bard's ideal
Of beauty, evanescent and unreal.
Thou art no mermaid, who, in ocean caves,
Sits, combing her dark hair beneath the waves;
To whom some merman, sitting still and mute,
Sings his praise, accompanied by the flute.
Thou art no fabled fay from Elfeland,
On roses dancing when the moon is bland.
Thou art no bee that haunts the honeyed hive;
Thou art—indeed, the meanest thing alive!

The Lost Child.

A SEA SKETCH.

BY ROGER STARBUCK.

"Ay, shipmates, I tell you, Captain Cameron is a tyrant!"

The speaker was Jack Band, a rough-looking young sailor aboard the ship *Reindeer*, bound from Australia to New York.

What he said was true. Some people, however, never like to hear the truth. The captain, who, unseen by Jack, was behind the mainmast, when the latter individual expressed himself, heard his remark.

"Come aft, here, you rascal!" he screamed.

Jack obeyed. "Seize him up in the mizzen-rigging!" continued Cameron, to his officers.

This was done. "Now, then, you dog!" cried the skipper to Jack, "confess that you lied, or I'll give you such a taste of the cat as you never had before in your life."

"No, sir," replied Jack, firmly, "what I said was the truth, and it would be a lie for me to say it was not."

The captain had procured the "cat" and drawn the strings through his hand.

Now he raised the instrument over the sailor's broad back.

Ere he could strike, a lovely young woman, who had heard the noise on deck, came up from the cabin and caught his arm. This woman was Mrs. Cameron, the captain's wife, who usually accompanied him on his voyages.

"No, husband! don't! don't!"

The captain colored. He loved his wife dearly, and, tyrant though he was to his men, he had always been ready to obey her slightest wish.

"The man has insulted me," he said. "You must not interfere, Mary."

"Henry," she said, firmly and gently, "I have a right to interfere in this matter. Common humanity requires it."

"He called me a tyrant. Go below, Mary, and don't meddle."

"Henry, as truly as there is a sky above us, if you strike that poor man, you lose my respect forever!"

I had a little brother once, who was flogged aboard a vessel, so that he died from his injuries. Oh, husband, don't imitate that bad captain!"

Cameron stood, undecided, a moment. Then he cut the lashings that held the sailor to the rigging.

"I will not flog him, but he shall leave my ship at once. I will have him put ashore on yonder island!"

The island was a beautiful one—about half a league to leeward—full of fruits, flowers, murmuring streams, and inhabited by half-civilized natives.

Mrs. Cameron would have remonstrated, but she knew by the expression of Jack's face that he would be glad to get away from the ship.

The captain backed his main-yard, a boat was lowered, and Jack was put ashore. The natives, who came down to the beach, did not seem unfriendly. The sailor was left with them, and the boat returned to the ship.

Three months later, the vessel arrived safely at New York.

The captain remained ashore two years—during which a child was born to him—ere he went to sea again, bound for Australia.

With him went wife and child, and a hired nurse.

The latter was a singular woman—a dark-looking creature, with wild eyes, and black hair.

At times she behaved in a strange manner, which soon made Mrs. Cameron and her husband suspect that she was partially crazy, instead of merely eccentric, as, during their previous brief acquaintance with her, they had thought was the case.

The longer the ship was at sea, the wilder this woman seemed to become.

At last, when the vessel was within about six days' sail of Australia, the captain spoke to his wife of putting Martha Gray—the name of the nurse—in confinement.

Her ravings and singular behavior had become the "talk" of the whole crew.

"No," remonstrated, his wife, "I am afraid it will make the poor creature worse. Be more gentle with her, Henry, and she will perhaps improve."

As usual, the captain complied with his wife's request. She had great power over him, and had improved him in many respects.

Though still a strict disciplinarian, and rather stern with his men, it could no more be said that he played the tyrant. He never overworked them, nor offered to strike them, as he had formerly been in the habit of doing.

Such is the influence of a good, pure woman.

On this day there was a boat towing astern, fast to the ship by a warp. The crew had been at work repairing the dead-lights, and had been obliged to leave off for other duty. The work was to be resumed on the following morning, and, as it was not blowing hard, the captain had resolved to leave the boat where it was all night.

For several days, the sky having been overcast, he had been unable to take an observation of the sun.

Therefore, not knowing his whereabouts, and the weather being foggy, he had all the watch, when night came, keeping a good look-out forward, under the direct superintendence of the officer of the deck.

Thus the quarter-deck was deserted.

A few hours before dawn Mrs. Cameron waked, to find her baby missing!

Usually she slept with the little thing in her arms; but, on this night, she must have turned over, away from the child, in her sleep.

There were two berths in the room—one above that she occupied, designed for the nurse.

Mrs. Cameron, on missing her baby,

sprung from her berth, to discover that Martha Gray was also gone!

A dreadful suspicion flashed on her mind. Martha had, perhaps, taken the baby, gone on deck with it, and jumped overboard with it in her arms!

"Oh, God! my child! my baby!" shouted the bereaved woman, rushing on deck.

No sign there of the half-crazed nurse or the child!

The captain, hearing his wife's cries, rushed on deck. Others gathered around.

The men had heard no noise like a splash, which they certainly would have done had Martha sprung into the sea with the babe.

The captain looked over the stern, and, by the light of the lantern in the mizzen-rigging, he discovered that the boat was gone—drew up the warp and perceived that it had been cut.

The truth was plain! Martha had gone off in the boat with the child!

The main-yard was hauled back, the quarter-boat lowered and soon manned. The captain headed the boat. Mrs. Cameron sat by her husband's side, wailing and moaning about her lost child.

On sped the boat, the lanterns in it throwing a broad glare over the water.

Soon a rock turned up ahead, showing the men they were close in shore.

"Land!" gasped the captain.

Here the current ran strongly. Drifting with it, one of the men suddenly caught hold of the fragment of a boat, which proved to be a piece of the missing one, as the name was painted on the wood.

"Lost!" moaned the captain—"I am afraid our child is lost. The boat must have been dashed to pieces on the rocks above, and Martha and the child been drowned."

The despairing shriek of the poor mother rung wildly. She bowed her head and sobbed and wailed, clasping her temples with both hands.

Every man was moved to tears.

"Praps they may have got ashore, after all," suggested an old tar.

Accordingly the captain and his men searched the rocks and the beach thoroughly.

Attached to a rock they discovered the child's little night-shirt, torn apart.

How could the babe's fate be longer doubted, when the little one had been held by the garment until the merciless current tore it away, whirling it to its death?



THE LOST CHILD.

It seemed as if poor Mrs. Cameron would go mad.

Convulsive sobs shook her whole frame; her grief was too deep for tears; her heart seemed breaking.

"My poor, drowned babe! my child! my little one! my all!" was her only response to every word of comfort.

"They're signalin' to us aboard ship!" said the old tar who had spoken before, pointing to one of the lanterns moving up and down.

Gloomily the captain gave orders to pull for the ship. All were soon aboard.

"Captain—Mrs. Cameron!" said the mate, who was dancing about in a singular manner, "come below!"

They went into the cabin—to behold a mother's berth. A rough fellow standing by, picked up a lantern and held it over the little one.

The captain recognized him at once. He was Jack Band.

The mother rushed up to her babe and fell down by it on her knees, clasping and kissing it, hysterically.

"You see, sir," said Jack, "I seen the lights of your ship in the fog, and being afraid you'd go ashore, I was getting my skiff ready to come out and warn you, when what should I see, by the light of my lantern, come along, strikin' on the rocks and breaking up, but a boat, with a woman and a child in it. Well, sir, I rushed in and saved 'em, drawing 'em into my skiff. I questioned the woman, and saw she was crazy; but she knew enough to tell me the name of the ship and her captain, when I thanked God that it fell to my lot to save the child of Mrs. Cameron, who had interfered with you when you were a-going to flog me. Well, sir, I've brought 'em both aboard—the child and the woman."

"God bless you for it!" cried the captain.

"I did not know I was off the island upon which I landed you two years ago, and where I hope you have not had a hard time."

"I've enjoyed myself there," answered Jack, "but think I'll soon go home to New York again."

Mrs. Cameron now turned to Jack and thanked him fervently for saving her child.

The captain persuaded the sailor to remain with him, and when they eventually reached New York he taught him navigation, and obtained for him the situation of captain of a fine clipper, aboard which Jack did well, eventually becoming a rich man.

Camp-Fire Yarns.

Lost in the Perdinalles.

BY RALPH RINGWOOD.

THERE is a belief extant that when a man on horseback loses his way, the best plan to extricate himself from the difficulty is to throw down the reins, and let the animal choose his own road.

The "rule," as a general thing, will work for good, but not always, for now and then your dumb companion will make the most egregious blunders.

The incident I am going to relate will, I think, fairly bear me out in the last assertion; at any rate, it taught me ever after to be exceedingly careful about trusting to "animal instinct."

In the year 184—I opened up a ranch on Benson's Fork, up near the Perdinalles Hills, and from the very beginning thrived wonderfully well.

The year following I began to hear rumors among the stock-men of a party of regularly-organized banditti, who had made their headquarters somewhere back in the most rugged part of the range, from whence they sallied out upon emigrant-trains, stock ranches, lonely farm-houses, etc.; often capturing individuals, whom they held until a certain ransom was paid, either money or cattle.

If the latter, they were driven north to Missouri, and disposed of in the markets there.

As yet I had made no acquaintance with these gentry, nor did I wish to do so, but the fates had determined that I should do so.

I had been across the mountain to a distant ranch in search of some young cattle that had strayed, and being detained hunting them out from my neighbor's immense drove, I found myself, just as the sun was setting, at the foot of the mountain upon the western or furthest side from my place.

Under ordinary circumstances this would have given me no uneasiness, but there were perceptible signs of a norther in the atmosphere, and to be caught on the mountain by one was no joke, I well knew.

Half-way up the narrow, irregular trail, the storm burst upon me with unparalleled force. The heavens almost instantly became covered with a dense mass of black, angry clouds, completely shutting out the light of a new moon, and rendering it so in-

when the sound of human voices fell upon my ear.

I had just time to crouch down against the rocky wall in a slight indentation that fortunately occurred where I stood, when two men, walking in Indian file, that is, one before the other, brushed past, almost touching me with their garments as they went.

"I tell you I heard somebody blundering about in here," said the foremost.

"More like a ground hog," growled the other. "Come, less go back to the fire."

"Not till I gets to the end of this gully," replied the other, and they passed on and were soon out of hearing.

They did not long remain so, however. I heard a sudden shout, the quick thud of my horse's feet as he broke away down the valley, the sharp report of a pistol, and almost instantly the narrow pass was filled with men hurrying forward to ascertain the cause of the disturbance. Another shot followed the first, and then as the new comers reached the open valley, I heard a deep, harsh voice rapidly issuing orders to cut off the flight of the retreating horseman. They evidently thought the animal had a rider, and were after him vigorously.

A few words dropped by the last two figures as they hurried by me, gave a cue to govern my actions.

"Who's behind in camp?" asked one.

"Nobody," was the reply. "but the prisoner's fast enough, an' I reckon he won't run fur," and they too passed beyond hearing.

I knew that I must act quickly, for they would soon return from a bootless chase, and at once leaving my shelter, I ran up the pass a few paces, and debouched into the valley again, which here spread out to nearly twice its original width. Close in under the face of the rock, to my left as I came out, I saw a bright fire burning, while scattered around were articles, such as packs, cooking-utensils, arms, etc., that showed this to be their camping-place.

But what attracted my especial attention, was the form of a man lying at full length upon the ground near the fire, securely bound, hand and foot.

This was evidently the prisoner of whom I had heard the men speak, and I at once approached, drawing my hunting-knife in the mean time, with the intention of releasing him from his bonds.

"For God's sake, don't murder me; the ransom—"

Before he could finish the sentence, I had cut the lariat, and raised him to his feet.

luck that had saved me from their clutches, and I would decidedly object to again undergoing a like advantage.

Beat Time's Notes.

COMMENDATIONS of my Cough and Cold Balsam, and Lung Renewer, continue to come in.

"I had a violent cold, and, merely intending to buy it, I was cured."

"My little doll-baby suffered from loss of voice, and I administered two spoonfuls and its voice came back."

"I couldn't sing; from the day of my birth I never could sing at all. I took one bottle of it, and have gone into the concert business, for I now can sing any thing, even without looking at these notes."

"Something like a severe cold settled on the musical system of our church organ—the bass notes refused to be pulled; the upper notes faded into mere whispers—in fact, most of the notes stuck in the wind-pipes, though goose-grease was lavishly applied; two bottles made every thing as clear as a whistle, and the organ breathes strong and free."

"My wife has for a long time had and made all kinds of complaints. One bottle was plenty. I feel better."

"I eloked with anger lately to see nothing on the table for dinner, and hear my wife say the money she got from home was all gone. One spoonful relieved me."

"Before taking it I could scarcely preach half an hour. I now can preach from two to three hours, and don't get half as tired as the congregation does."

"A friend of mine during a spell of sickness lost his voice along with his breath. A small dose brought both back."

"I used a bottle of it for my lungs, which were badly decayed; they will now last for several decades."

"It completely restored a bellows in our blacksmith shop."

"It is one of the best things out."

The probabilities of life present fruitful themes for study; and probably no one ever had more probabilities than my late lamented friend Wiggles. Though known but to a few, that man might have been, under a happier fortune, queen of the Amazons. Though totally unable to read, it is probable that he would have made one of the wisest men of our day if he hadn't been hindered. Having no aspirations above his daily occupation of a hostler, how easy is it for the mind to picture him as occupying a mayor's seat, and receiving his honors and his pay regularly. Just think of it. He had more hair on his head and clothes than even the great Napoleon, and what worlds might he have conquered if his chances had been equal to the emergency! Though made in the image of other people, he might have been a monkey. But he is dead, and when I consider how he might be living to this day, I feel very thankful that this probability is not possible, and try this bottle of new wine, which a merchant sent me for an act of kindness and charity which I did him when he was a boy—I bought him a fine-tooth comb and started him up in the seining business.

When I am busy at writing I love to hear the voices of children ringing out their over-plus of infantile and unbottleable merriment, and see them romping, running and tumbling in jocular hilarity—I say I like to see and hear them when I am two miles off with a spy-glass without glasses, and an ear trumpet with cotton in it.

Why are boot-blacks, about beginning to polish, like seekers for high renown? Because they expectorate first. The man who got this off has been in the hands of a skillful physician, and I am happy to say is very likely to recover.

When a lover gets in despair he is more than likely to get in-discreet.

If two saw-logs, at so much a gross, in a certain number of hours, were planted in two rows running parallel to each other and only stopping when they get tired, produce fifty pounds of sugar of lead, forty pounds of gaiter-percha and a couple of pigs of iron, how many years old is a boy whose grandfather died while she was three years young, and who has freckles?

SOLUTION: add versity and add libitum together; set the bricks down in a row, but don't touch them lest they all fall; draw a clothes line under them; add a little sugar; multiply your virtues and divide by the number of months since you last swore off and didn't quit. This will give you the answer in pounds and inches, which you can easily reduce to years by boiling it down in a kettle-drum over a cake of hot ice and skimming it off. Vulgar fractions should not be employed at less than a dollar and a half a day, including board. Take your own time in reducing this, lest you find yourself reduced and you become a laughable example your own self. Care should be taken to keep the hogs from getting under the gate.

If we were obliged to sit and write all our goodness, what a large lot of incomplete manuscripts would there be when we died? It is awful even to think of the thought of thinking of it.

A good way to get rid of an old well is to dig a hole under it and let it fall in. There are other ways, but I believe there are none, as a whole, so simple as this.

The man who rose with the sun got very high about noon.

INK is diluted language.

It is wrong to suppose that only lame men were allowed to participate in the Olympic games of the Grecians?

If you see three crows on a dark night flying across a full moon, or three dry hens swimming in a duck-pond, late in the evening of a clear rainy day, you will see more than ever I did.

NOWADAYS, while the preacher talks of the "yawning gulf," the congregation are very apt to yawn, themselves. A sermon should be regular, potent, and devoid of gaps.

ALL the good that some men do in this world you could put in your eye and wonder where it went.

A young lady's eyes beam because they have a beam in them.

Yours, very verily, BEAT TIME.